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LEOPOLD WARNDORF.

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY

HENRY SUMMERSETT,

AUTHOR OF

THE MAD MAN OF THE MOUNTAIN, &c. &c. &c.

Imogen. " Why did you throw me from you?
" Think that you are upon a rock, and now
" Throw me again!"
Poſthumus. " Hang there, like fruit, my ſoul,
" Till the tree periſh!"

CYMBELINE.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

THE author of the following ſheets is unwilling to obtrude on the public any ſuperfluous matter; but he conceives that his reputation, if any has, or ever

ſhall be awarded him, demands a few words by way of preface.

Leopold Warndorf was, about two years ago, caſt in a dramatic mould; it contained characters which have ſince been put aſide, and attempts at humour which will not be found in theſe volumes.—"Oh! that I could ſee the inimitable Kemble aſſuming the paſſions of the Marquis—that I could hear the exquiſite tones of Mrs. Siddons ſwelling with the rage

rage and reſentment of Victoria; and the almoſt magic voice of Mrs. Jordan repeating the hopes and the ſorrows of the ſimple Antoinette!"—Theſe words I have not unfrequently uttered. The reader may ſmile at my vanity;—I have ſmiled at it myſelf. My ambition faded: the fancied laugh of the Manager was a death-blow; and I put aſide my papers, becauſe I would not be reminded of my own folly and preſumption.

At length I brought them to the light again, and at intervals began to form them into a Novel. I changed the ſcene of action from France to Germany, gave new names and titles to my characters, and had actually written the firſt volume, when I went to ſee the repreſentation of a new Play, which deſervedly became a favourite with the town. I was agitated by the excellence of the performance: and when I left the Theatre, I fancied there was a great

ſimilitude

ſimilitude between the drama and what I had then written and deſigned. Self-aſſured, however, of my honeſty, I proceeded in my work, which I completed in the manner as it is now preſented to the public; and I ſhall never think myſelf more indebted to the German poet, than he is to me. Indeed the likeneſs has ſince appeared to me *very faint*; and I am perſuaded that my book contains not a ſentence that may be traced

traced in the author to whom I have alluded.

It may be ſaid by ſome, that, even in this ſhort appeal, there is much ado about nothing; and the ſenſe of my own feebleneſs prevents me from aiming at ſuch a ſtupendous giant as Kotzebue. But I know the prejudices ariſing from compariſon; and I do not think it improbable, but that a certain ſet of monthly critics (I ſpeak not of the *Monthly Reviewers*), may,

may, in ſome after ſeaſon, aſſure their readers that my book bears a reſemblance, though ſuch an one as *by no means is favourable to the imitator*, to Peregrine Pickle, or to the facetious Humphry Clinker.

Hamlet. Methinks it is like a weaſel.

Polonius. It is back'd like a weaſel.

Hamlet. Or, like a whale?

Polonius. Very like a whale.

Some of the inconſiſtencies of the Daniſh Courtier may be found

in the ingenious critics of the eighteenth century; among whom I ſhall not be ſurpriſed to diſcover thoſe who will conſider me as a pigmy, too diminutive to be bound on the wheel of torture.

LEOPOLD WARNDORF.

Isabella to Baron Altenburg.

ALLOW me to offer you my congratulations on a late happy occasion—congratulations which flow from the heart, not merely from the tongue. Coming from me, and on such circumstances, they should be unbounded,

remember, Sir, who I was, and who I am? I ſacrificed the opinion of the world and every thing to you; and when the finger of deriſion and contempt has been pointed to me, I have ſcorned it on your account, and gloried in that connection with you which the world loudly called my ſhame.

What if I had deſerted you, and fled to the arms of another, would you not have upbraided, ſcorned, curſed me? Why then ſhould I not upbraid, ſcorn, and curſe you for your treachery and hypocriſy? But my lips ſhall be ſealed on this ſubject for ever. Remember, however, that my

enmity

enmity will not ſleep: at ſome future day I will be revenged, amply revenged. My malice will ever be waking; reſt not, therefore, in ſecurity: I will plot miſchief, and execute it. The law ſhall not reach me; your power ſhall dwindle into impotence; and if any horrid diſaſter ſhould befal you, regard it as the revenge of

Isabella Marilli.

The Baron to Iſabella.

YOUR frantic letter has reached me; the language of it ſhocks me. I

am, however, inclined to view it as a burſt of frenzy, and cannot think but that, when reaſon returns, you will regard it with horror and repentance. Were you not fearful of having your hand ſtiffened by the anger of Heaven when it was employed in giving characters to your dreadful execrations? Did the hyena poſſeſs the powers of the human voice, it could not, even in its moſt ſavage moments, expreſs any thing more ſhocking and atrocious.

Iſabella, I know the ſtrength of your mind, the fervour of your paſſions, and the irritability of your diſpoſition: but

but there have been times when your ſentiments have charmed me—when love has been predominant in your boſom, and when your temper has followed mine through all its mazes, and ſhewn itſelf with ſuperiority.

Hear me, Iſabella—I entreat you to hear me with patience. I think I can extenuate the crime of which I am accuſed, for my own conſcience has already acquitted me of it.

You will remember that ſeventeen years have paſſed ſince we firſt met in Italy. Finding you regardleſs of certain forms and eſtabliſhments obſerved in ſociety, I began an acquaintance

with you of ſuch a nature, I conceived, as the diſſatisfaction of either of us might readily diſſolve. I admit that I was the firſt object of your choice, and alſo that I have never had any reaſon to ſuppoſe that I was only a ſharer of your affections;—you yielded to me, and ſurely I made equal ſacrifices.

Did not my father on his death-bed declare that my connection with you had been the moſt ſevere of his afflictions? Did not my uncle, his ſurviving brother, diſpoſe of his immenſe property to enrich ſhrines, and to fatten Monks, in order that he might reduce to poverty the man who refuſed

to

to abandon you? After that, limited as I was, did I not for ſeveral years attach myſelf to you, ſupport you with elegance, reſent each injury that was offered to you, and make you an object of greater conſideration than myſelf?

My conduct and propenſities have been of a very faulty nature; they led me into ſuch extravagances, that I lately found ruin ſtaring at and menacing me. My fortune was reduced to the loweſt ſtate, and I was almoſt wild when thinking on the means of re-eſtabliſhing it. I thought of marriage, but at the ſame time thought of you, Iſabella, and was pained. I had many internal ſtruggles, and the combat between love and neceſſity was

obſtinate ;—the latter, however, convincing me that it were better to place you in ſingle independence, than plunge you into the diſtreſs that threatened me, I reſolved to perſevere in my new-formed intention ; and, during my abſence from you, which you ſo forcibly urged me to account for, and which the want of fortitude prevented me from doing, I ſelected a woman, young, beautiful, and rich. I married her ; and I confeſs to you that I love her. The paſſion which I entertained for you muſt, if I wiſh for happineſs, be ſuppreſſed—it is my duty to conquer it : but if you will in its place allow me to ſubſtitute friendſhip, it ſhall attend you till my heart grows cold in my boſom.

Your

Your threats, Iſabella, are futile; made in a moment of paſſion, they are, I hope, already forgotten. Retire from Vienna, and you ſhall receive an annual ſum ſufficient for your ſupport: make a propoſal yourſelf; let me know your wiſhes on the ſubject, and I will readily, cheerfully accede to them. Remember, however, that you muſt retire from Vienna; Iſabella and Chriſtiana muſt not be near to me at one time, leſt my new-formed principles ſhould be deſtroyed, and my old habits again imperceptibly ſteal on me.

Your cool judgment, not your paſſions, muſt direct you; and I think,

Iſabella, however ſevere are your invectives, I think it is not poſſible for you to hate me—to curſe me *twice!* Neceſſity has of late been my directreſs; and, as my heart did not wilfully ſtray from you, pity and forgive me.

One ſubject I have not yet touched upon—our daughter, the child of our love:—God bleſs her! I am *indeed* her father—I feel it, I feel it this moment in my ſoul. She is now ſixteen—ſweet, blooming, beautiful! Iſabella, yield her up to me; I will place her with an accompliſhed lady, who, I am convinced, will give the fineſt poliſh to this rich diamond.

I will ſee her often—you ſhall ſee her at certain periods; and when ſhe arrives at the age of twenty, Chriſtiana's dowery ſhall provide a fortune for Iſabella's daughter. Think of this ſeriouſly. Kiſs my dear girl for me, and prepare her to accompany the perſon whom I ſhall ſend for her in the courſe of a few days.

And now, Iſabella, I am writing a painful word—Farewel! I ſee you at this moment; your rage is huſhed, you are ſad, dejected; you pity, you love

Altenburg.

Iſabella

Iſabella to the Baron.

IT was my intention, Baron, to have remained ſilent after having written my laſt letter to you; but it is neceſſary I ſhould addreſs you again. The winds laugh at the poplar that bows at their paſſing; you, probably, exult with the idea of having bent me down with your conſequence: but you are deceived in reſpect to my ſtate; my ſoul is ſtill great in its monarchy, and as much as ever deſpiſes your perfidy and hypocriſy.

Your

Your laſt epiſtle has cauſed me to ſmile, but not to weep; no, Sir, I have done with ſorrow;—if I muſt be tormented, it ſhall be by active pain, not by that dull anguiſh which makes the ſufferer contemptible.

You have not yet convinced me but that you are a proud, inſulting monſter—a ſelfiſh being, who, for his own preſervation, or for the pleaſures of a dainty mind, ſcruples not to ſacrifice his honour, and the peace of thoſe to whom he is forſworn. A ſpider, hideous and venomous as yourſelf, would ſpin a ſtronger web than that of your arguments; flimſy in its texture, and ſorry in its conſtruction,

tion, a breath, a vapour will deſtroy it.

Baron, I once loved as much as I now deſpiſe you. I have bleſſed you a thouſand and a thouſand times; why have you given me cauſe to curſe you eternally? From a paſſage in your letter, it might be inferred that you ſtepped from poverty by your late pleaſing gradations, merely to ſave *me* from it. Worthy man! I want a new heart to thank you for it.

To be near you was once to be happy. In the days of our acquaintance, had you, in conſequence of crime, been ſent to any diſtant country

to

to be made a common drudge, or to the gallies, or to the mines, I would have been your aſſociate priſoner. In the winter, I would have retained only one of my coverings, and warmed your limbs with the others; and in the ſummer, my hand ſhould have removed each drop of ſweat as ſoon as it ſtarted upon your brow. Theſe are not the boaſtings of romance; but whatever they are, they ſhall ſink, and be forgotten.

You have been very elaborate in ſtating your compulſions and your motives for withdrawing yourſelf from my ſociety, and given yourſelf much unneceſſary trouble in repeating ſtale incidents.

incidents. Sir, did you conceive yourſelf as appeaſing an incenſed proſtitute, or as pleading to the ear of ignorance and ſtupidity?

Inſulting man! do you not remember that I am allied to a family, the honour of which was not blemiſhed till I fooliſhly attached myſelf to you and your fortunes? My father curſed me, my mother abhorred me, my ſiſter turned from me, my friends contemned me!—Wretch, wretch! all this they did, and thus was I loſt to them, becauſe I loved, and ſo madly gave myſelf up to you. Preach no more, then, on neceſſity—my dare was the greater; but your's is the triumph

triumph over misplaced love and infatuation.

Baron, I will leave Vienna when I please; I will have no stipulations. If my continuance here can either pain or perplex you, I will be rooted.—You will provide for my necessities!—*You!* I would hunt with dogs in the street for food, beg it from door to door, supplicate every passing stranger for charity, rather than receive the sorriest pittance from you—famish, perish first. I reject all your services; and again avow myself your implacable enemy.

Our

Our daughter!—Think you I will give her up to you—that I will entruſt her with the man who betrayed and deſerted her mother, in order that ſhe may receive a proviſion from the dowery of Chriſtiana? Pitiful man! to kill her would be better than to betray her.

On hearing the news of your marriage, I ſent for her;—ſhe ſtood before me as a mark of my ſhame: ſhe at that moment ſeemed to bear a ſtronger likeneſs to you than ever. I ſtruck her with violence, and made her bleed!—Oh my beloved child! pardon the action of a frenzied mother! I kiſſed off all the blood, and died my lips.

lips. I love her fifty thouſand times more than ever. You ſhould have my heart from my boſom rather than my adored child. What if I had murdered her? God would have made *you* anſwerable for the crime, and acquitted me. I ſtruck my daughter!—Oh I ſhall remember it on my death-bed!

Altenburg, you are deceived; I have no more love for you than for any of the brute creation. My paſſions may, in ſome degree, ſubſide; but the ſpirit of revenge I will not attempt to conquer.

Iſabella.

Baron

Baron Altenburg to Count Stendal.

SOME few years ago, dear Count, I ſent you my congratulations on your having attained a wife; and in your anſwer, you laughingly wiſhed that I would afford you the opportunity of ſhewing to me an equal civility on a ſimilar occaſion;—the time to felicitate me is arrived, for I am married.

About a week has elapſed ſince I became the huſband of a charming woman, with whom I hope to live in true happineſs and enjoyment, forgetful of the errors of youth, and of the follies

follies of riper years, and in directing my views towards ſuch objects as an improved and corrected conſcience ſhall point out to me. So have I reſolved and ſworn myſelf to do, and I daily diſcover a growing ſtability in my mind, which aſſiſts me in my beſt projects; and from which I infer that I ſhall be enabled to tread the paths of honour and of rectitude without deviating into thoſe of diſſipation and extravagance, in which I have too long been an unwary and idle traveller.

Many of my follies, which my late father ſo much lamented, and which, in his latter days, added poignancy to his

his afflictions, originated even from his own inattention; for when I was a mere boy, he not only allowed me a free command of money, but prompted me to a profuse expenditure, unwisely thinking that the liberality of the hand would create liberality of heart.

Sent into the world at a very early age, the good precepts which had been laid down for my edification, were soon put to flight; and my young companions laughed at my morality, till I myself began to ridicule it. Italy is not the soil for virtue; and thither I was sent, under the direction of a tutor, who frequented the bath of Venus more often than the

temple

temple of Minerva; and who would rather ſtep into the ſteamy refectory of Epicurus, than into the ſchools of philoſophy, though to my father he had ſhewn himſelf a ſtoic, and animadverted on the practice of morality as earneſtly as on the culpability of the minor and elder vices. A puniſhment of the greateſt ſeverity ought to be inflicted on ſuch dangerous hypocrites; ſo, however, at that time I did not think. I regarded him as an obliging, accommodating perſon, and was glad that he would not only allow, but alſo partake of the gaieties of life.

I was ſcarcely nineteen when I became acquainted with Iſabella, who

from that period, till very lately, continued to reſide with me, and by whom, you know, I have a charming daughter.

My companion was a moſt extraordinary young woman; ſhe was held as a ſingular character; and her peculiar ſentiments almoſt entirely excluded her from female ſociety: ſuch ſociety, however, ſhe did not court. She had the mind of a man, combined of judgment, wit, and fancy: in aſſociating with the oppoſite ſex ſhe was happy; and being in ſome degree diſcountenanced by her family, ſhe reſigned herſelf up to me, and our gratification was mutual.

At

At certain different periods I have propoſed to marry her, when ſhe has aſſured me that her happineſs was complete, and that neither law nor cuſtom could poſſibly improve it. Iſabella was deficient of property; and for the firſt eight years I lived with ſuch freedom, that I found the inconvenience of it: and my father and family were ſo diſguſted with my habits of life, from which, however, I was not to be diverted, that they made my fortune conſiderably narrower.

When they left the world, I found my expectations greatly baffled; and I confeſs that I regarded them as rigid

moraliſts, who, naturally too coldly conſtituted to participate in pleaſure themſelves, churliſhly thought my trifling indulgences ſerious vices, and all my pleaſing gaieties unpardonable levities. Even my external mourning was limited: the world ſoon received me again, and its pleaſures I purſued with increaſed avidity. To be coldly prudent I thought unneceſſary and abſurd; to be gay, and to ſeek for pleaſant varieties, I only ſeemed to live. My mind, therefore, ſeldom dwelt upon my father; and my cynic uncle, who had removed all his gold from my graſp, I blotted out of my memory.

From

From thoughtleſs expenditure, I ran to extravagance; diſſipation was ſweeping away my property; and the pleaſure that I courted, and in which Iſabella joined, would not, I conceived, be ſucceeded by any degree of pain, or of repentance. But I was deceived; an attachment to gaming, and a ſeries of ill fortune, made me a complete bankrupt; and I was reduced almoſt to poverty, though Iſabella had no ſuſpicion of my circumſtances being even impaired.

Dear Count, I am afraid that I have already tired you with the repetition of my follies; with ſome of them you were before acquainted, but the worſt

of them I have hitherto concealed from you. I will paſs haſtily over the ſubject by merely ſaying that the reduction of my fortune and conſequence I had not ſufficient philoſophy to withſtand—it tortured, almoſt diſtracted me; and I reflected ſeriouſly, as at ſuch times moſt prodigals do, on my extreme folly and culpability.

Forming an excuſe of buſineſs, I quitted Iſabella for two months, and retired into the country, having previouſly, but with conſiderable difficulty, bound my moſt ſerious creditors to a temporary forbearance and ſecrecy.

An

An accuſing conſcience haunted me: my eyes were no longer miſty; and the conduct of my father and my uncle now appeared to me to be the reſult of caution, rather than of vindictive malice. I went to the houſe of a friend, at ſome diſtance from Vienna, and to that friend I made known all my indiſcretions, which created pain, and even drew tears from me. He pitied me when he found my repentance ſincere, and endeavoured to conſole me with good hopes. His fortune was not very large, but he generouſly tendered me a part of it; and having begged me to pardon him for his freedom, he cenſured many of my paſt faults, and

laid down to me a regular plan of life, to which I ſeriouſly attended.

He adviſed me to re-eſtabliſh my fortune by marriage, and introduced me to a lady of birth and education, ſeriouſly adviſing me to make myſelf as agreeable to her as poſſible. I thought of Iſabella with pain, and at firſt could not liſten to his advice; but my ideas wandering again into their late perplexing track, I agreed to endeavour to inſinuate myſelf into the favour of Chriſtiana, and to aim at ſecuring her affections.

This taſk, however, I was ſcarcely equal to;—Iſabella oppoſed it, ho-

nour oppoſed it: ſtill I carried on my deſigns with all poſſible ingenuity. I confeſs I uſed many little artifices; which, in the courſe of two months, I diſcovered had ſecured me her heart. I now really loved her, and reſolved to offer myſelf to her;—I did ſo, and was accepted. But before I could do this, I had a thouſand internal ſtruggles; neceſſity, however, urged me on, and my friend applauded and encouraged me.

Chriſtiana's fortune was very large, and at her free diſpoſal. Unwilling that ſo young and excellent a woman ſhould be deceived in her object, I ſtated to her my reduced wealth,

laid my heart and its tranſgreſſions open to her, and ingenuouſly ſhewed myſelf as I had been, and then was. She thanked me for my openneſs with a ſweetneſs that reached, and almoſt melted my ſoul; ſmilingly offered to countenance the daughter of Iſabella after ſhe had been brought into notice by an amiable female friend; and entreated me to appropriate a fund for the uſe of her mother, my late companion.

The ſentiments of Chriſtiana raiſed my admiration; theſe truths which, as a man of honour, I thought proper to make known to her, and which many women would have ſhut their ears

ears againſt, ſhe placidly liſtened to; and in the plan of her own gratification, ſhe did not neglect the happineſs of thoſe with whom I had been ſo long, ſo intimately, and I may add, ſo dearly connected.

I married; received the congratulations of my friend, and carried my lovely bride to Vienna juſt four months after I had left it; and, at her earneſt requeſt, immediately paid thoſe creditors, the fear of whom had driven me from that city.

I was preparing to apprize Iſabella of my marriage, and to make ſuch pecuniary arrangements for her as my

friendſhip prompted me—*(friendſhip!* perhaps it was ſomething more), when I received from her a letter, written in a ſtyle of frenzy, and not only intimating a knowledge of my union, but alſo a rooted hatred to me, expreſſing many curſes, and declaring eternal enmity.

Though her letter led me almoſt to ſuppoſe that ſhe had been deprived of reaſon, I immediately anſwered it. Feeling moſt ſenſibly for her ſituation, I endeavoured to ſooth and tranquillize her; and, after making ſome propoſals for her future accommodation, entreated her to yield her child up to me. This has only ſerved to ſtrengthen

her reſentment. She replies that ſhe deteſts me, that ſhe deſpiſes aſſiſtance, and that ſhe will not part from her daughter. Her letters agitated and affected me; for my own tranquillity I put them into the flames. I fear, Count, that I have——I ought not to proceed.

I truſt that the preſent ſtorm will ſoon be huſhed by ſerenity, and that I and Chriſtiana ſhall be uninterruptedly happy:—ſhe is a noble creature, and I cannot love her too well; ſhe wins upon me in a moment, and in an hour ſhe abſolutely faſcinates. I muſt be compounded of all the different

vices

vices if ever I abuſe her love and generoſity.

Oh dear Stendal! I think I am now ſecure in virtue and in happineſs. The ſea-boy falling from the talleſt maſt, and caught midway by a fellow-mariner, cannot more rejoice at his preſervation than I do. And yet poor Iſabella!—my ſweet daughter! Count, ſurely I may, in ſome degree, ſtill love the former; for what is the difference between love and friendſhip? and as to the latter, not even Chriſtiana is dearer to the heart of

Altenburg.

Count

Count Stendal to Baron Altenburg.

AN account of your wedding, dear Altenburg, had reached me before I received your letter; which, however, does not prevent me from wiſhing you every poſſible felicity, and much permanent happineſs. Rumour has been of late very buſy with your name; and in the loquacity of her goſſipings, I muſt add, ſhe has not been tender of your reputation. Her accuſations againſt you are numerous; and ſhe has given out that with your miſtreſs you have been cruel and perfidious,

fidious, and with your wife deſigning and hypocritical.

Theſe are the journeying ſtories of the day—the tales of thoſe who are better pleaſed in attending to the concerns of other people than to their own. You muſt not be angry with me for introducing them here, nor regard me with reſentment till I join the gabbling party of your cenſurers.

And yet I am tempted to riſk your diſpleaſure in ſpeaking of the ſubject to which you have led me: you have not, it is true, enquired the nature of my ſentiments; the tenor of your own language, however, encourages me to treat

treat you with little ceremony, and to ſpeak freely of thoſe matters concerning which you have been ſo unreſerved. You have indeed, Altenburg, laid yourſelf very open to me; the cauſes that you aſſign for your early deviations, have conſiderable weight; and the character of your tutor I hold to be odious, and alſo know to be juſt.

I have at different periods taken ſome pains in examining the qualities of which you are compoſed, and many times lamented that habit ſhould have deſtroyed what Nature had ſo well and generouſly executed. I muſt not forget that I am addreſſing a man equal

to

to me in years and underſtanding—who was my ſchoolfellow, my earlieſt aſſociate, and the merry companion of my livelieſt days. I nevertheleſs wiſh to deal frankly with you, and to ſpeak in the ſame manner that you have in paſt times freely ſanctioned.

Your firſt acquaintance with Iſabella was unfortunate, your cloſer connection ſtill more unhappy. To begin at the age of nineteen too!—mere boy and girl; and yet, forſooth, in your own opinions you were philoſophers! Iſabella was a deluded woman; but though ſhe continued ſo long in concubinage, I cannot rimple my brows at her according to the rules

rules of our rigid moraliſts—I cannot help pitying her.

Altenburg, you ſhould not have deſerted her: your errors were mutual, your pleaſures mutual; and your diſtreſſes ought to have been the ſame. You ſtepped together into guilt; you did not take her ſtained from its ſchool. You admit her fidelity for ſixteen years—that ſhe was wife, tender, affectionate, and that ſhe brought you a lovely daughter. Such a woman I cannot call a proſtitute, and ſuch a woman you ought not to have wronged.

I wonder

I wonder not at her preſent diſtraction. Remember, Altenburg, that you admit ſhe has never offended you ſince you offered to make her your wife, and which propoſal ſhe did not catch at, merely becauſe ſhe was ſecure in your love and honour. You have done wrong:—marry to remove your embarraſſments! Why did you not apply to me? Did I not once accept of a loan from you, remain a long time your debtor, and even pay you by inſtalments? Why then, in the days of my proſperity, could you not condeſcend to aſk me for a ſimilar aſſiſtance? I can ſcarcely pardon this pride.

Dear

Dear Altenburg, whatever harſhneſs this letter beſpeaks, I am moſt truly your friend; I wiſh ſincerely for your happineſs, and for the happineſs of Chriſtiana, of whom you have drawn ſo lovely a picture. Your ſituation is peculiar, and you muſt cautiouſly frame your actions according to it, or your felicity will paſs over as a viſion. You muſt not truſt yourſelf with Iſabella even for a moment; there would be moſt imminent danger in it. Do her juſtice as far as you can; and retire for a while with your wife into the country.

Though you have forgotten your old vows, remember, I conjure you,

your

your new ones; thoſe which are made in the open air, ought to be as religiouſly obſerved as thoſe uttered at the altar. I hope you are firm, my friend, in your reſolutions; and yet I am almoſt afraid to truſt ſuch a heart as your's. I again entreat you to leave Vienna: I ſhall be prevented by a viſit that I am going to make, to offer you an invitation; but I wiſh you to write to me frequently, and to direct to me at W——. Happineſs to the friend of

Stendal.

To

To Iſabella.

THE encloſed bills are preſented to Signora Marilli with all poſſible reſpect; and the perſon who has taken the preſent liberty, entreats her to do him the honour of accepting them. He hopes he ſhall not be accuſed of indelicacy in mentioning the name of Altenburg, and in aſſuring her that the Baron has no knowledge of, or intereſt in the tranſaction.

Stranger as the writer of this is to Signora Marilli, he feels a more than common intereſt in her fate, and in that

that of her lovely daughter—an intereſt which no ſelfiſh or improper view has created, and from which nothing more than their accommodation and happineſs is expected.

If the Signora ſhould be returning to Italy before her ſupplies from that country arrive, and will ſtill further oblige an unknown friend by allowing him to do away that inconvenience, he will be moſt truly happy, and any ſum may be readily commanded by her. She is entreated to give the ſtranger an anſwer, directing it to Mr. H——, at the poſt-office at B——; and again aſſured that her acquieſcence to his requeſt will be in the greateſt degree

pleaſing,

pleaſing, and alſo that the obligation will be ever conſidered to reſt on him alone.

To Count Stendal.

ABOUT two years ago, you, my Lord, ſpent a few days with Baron Altenburg, a man who was once known, and dearly loved by me. I was then an inmate of the ſame houſe; and whenever in your company, the goodneſs of your heart, the richneſs of your mind, and the delicacy of your manners could not fail to impreſs, and to ſhew me your genuine merit.

The peculiarity of my ſituation quickened my remarks on ſociety; I endeavoured to diſcriminate as juſtly as poſſible, and I think it was not often that I looked with the eyes of prejudice. I deal not in flattery, Count, but muſt ſay that your manners and deportment excited the admiration of Altenburg's miſtreſs, which was my worldly appellation.

You may, perhaps, remember that you once preſented me with a written copy of ſome beautiful verſes; it was made by your own hand, and conjecturing it was alſo your own muſe that gave birth to the ideas, I have till this hour preſerved the lines, and very

often read them with increaſing admiration.

Some few days ago I received an anonymous letter, encloſing notes of value, and ſpeaking, I think, the language of Count Stendal. My ſurpriſe at firſt was more than common; and it was not till after many readings that I thought the characters of the hand familiar to my eye. Peruſing it ſtill more ſeriouſly, and thinking of your verſes, I immediately compared them, diſcovered them to be the ſame, and knew that he who ſtyled himſelf a ſtranger, was the generous Count Stendal.

My Lord, my Lord! your kindneſs has found a paſſage to my heart, which is impatient to pour its whole ſtore of gratitude before you. I cannot ſelect words, I cannot ſtudy a dreſs for language—but indeed I thank you, moſt ſincerely thank you.

You muſt, however, pardon me for returning that part of your packet which I hold the leaſt valuable: the bills you will receive again with this, but your letter I retain; and having ſtamped it on my memory, ſhall place it foremoſt in the depoſitory of friendſhip. I may hereafter be very poor; and if poverty *can* make me

humble, I may then probably apply to ſo excellent a friend and benefactor.

My daughter--Oh theſe fooliſh tears!—my daughter will cheer me in every diſtreſs; her ſmiles will irradiate the cells of want; and her ſweetneſs, her innocence——Dear my Lord, beware of the profeſſed friendſhip of the Baron. He who can act as Altenburg has done, can ſtep beyond the devil in villany; can ſlur religion, violate ſanctity, ſpread corruption, and blow a peſtilence around him.

Deny not, my Lord, your generous impoſition, for I am ſure my ſuſpicions

do not deceive me; and though I decline your friendly ſervices, I bleſs you for the motives that prompted you to offer them. I am not returning to Italy—I have no country, no friends! I am an outcaſt, a forlorn and miſerable alien! The perfidy and cruel deſertion of Altenburg may corrupt my heart, and cauſe it to act deſperately, but ſhall never make it inſenſible to ſuch a friend as your Lordſhip.

Isabella Marilli.

Baron

Baron Altenburg to Count Stendal.

STENDAL, what a letter have you written to me! I read it with horror, remorſe, and anguiſh; and fearing to truſt my eyes with it too often, I put it into the fire, and endeavoured to forget all that it contained: but every ſentence, every word was impreſſed firmly on my mind; I alternately thought you cruel and juſt, unmerciful and candid.

Surely, my friend, you deal too hardly with me, and make me more culpable than I really am. You know

not the nature and extent of my late pecuniary obligations; they were too heavy and too many for friendſhip to bear, nor could I have applied to you to be the witneſs of ſuch immenſe follies. Had not the demands of my creditors been immediately attended to, I muſt have reſigned my liberty, and entered a priſon; and in ſuch a ſtate, what could I poſſibly have done for the ſupport of Iſabella and her daughter? Nothing;—diſtreſs muſt inevitably have fallen on them, and they might have been even the victims of want.

If my arguments are fallacious, for God's ſake do not endeavour to cruſh them!

them! Some ſenſe of the propriety of my conduct it is abſolutely neceſſary to retain, or I ſhall be wretched indeed. I muſt enter no accuſations againſt myſelf; ſhould I do ſo, my preſent ſtate of content, which I admit is not perfect, would be fatally diſturbed, and the lines of miſery would be drawn over the plan that happineſs has begun to ſketch. If I am deceived in myſelf, let the illuſion continue; the veil withdrawn, my eyes might ever thereafter be open only to wretchedneſs and ſorrow.

You cannot conceive, Stendal, in what ſhocking language Iſabella has expreſſed her ſentiments on my mar-

riage; it is ſo ungovernably wild, ſo rude and ſavage, that I am fearful her intellects are affected: and yet now and then a ſoftneſs glides in undeſignedly, which diſſolves my ſoul, and gives her again to my imagination, not as a friend, but as the woman who faſcinated and held me in a long and willing bondage. Still ſhe vows eternal reſentment, talks of bringing ſomething fatal on me, and obſtinately refuſes all manner of aſſiſtance, preferring poverty and pain, beggary and contempt, to any ſervices which I have offered her!

Oh how miſerable ſhould I be were ſhe to experience the horrors of want! and

and I know not what means ſhe has of keeping them from her; for ſhe has reſigned every valuable to me, even her trinkets and *clothes!* and thoſe diamonds which, in the moments of love, I purchaſed to give brilliancy to charms that I adored, ſhe has ſent back to me—back to, as ſhe ſtyles me, "the venal Baron of Altenburg."

Count, in talking of this woman, I almoſt ſtart from reaſon; and if I do not ſoon put her from my memory, I ſhall be unworthy of the love of Chriſtiana, whoſe gentleneſs of conduct, and mildneſs of ſentiment, entitle her to admiration. Is it not uncommon that a wife ſhould be inte-

reſted, and even plead for the diſcarded miſtreſs of her huſband? Chriſtiana has done it with great fervour; but the ſubject diſtracting me, and an apparent indifference to the object being on my part neceſſary, I have entreated her to ſpeak no more on the ſubject, and ſhe promiſes to obey me.

The reſentment of Iſabella I find to be implacable; and your adviſing me to fly from her is judicious, and has been attended to. I muſt indulge no criminal affections; but it follows not that I muſt perforce hate where I ought not to love. I cannot do it, though ſhe curſes me ſo dreadfully; and as

to

to her daughter—*my* daughter—Oh Stendal, Stendal! have I reared this lovely flower merely to blaſt it, and tread it to the earth?

I ſhall leave Vienna in the courſe of a few days: the Baroneſs has an eſtate near Brinn; I have propoſed to retire thither for a ſhort time, and to this ſhe readily acceded. Indeed, my dear Count, ſhe is an exemplary woman, and I wiſh I could bring her to your acquaintance. I muſt, and will do juſtice to her virtues; and when I ceaſe to love her, may I inſtantly ceaſe to breathe!

In

In our propoſed retirement, I ſhall have leiſure to make my arrangements, to regulate my actions, and, I hope, to mould my heart anew. If you love me, upbraid me no more; adviſe me how to act in what is to come—cenſure me not for what is paſt. There is an accuſer ſufficiently ſevere in my own breaſt: add not, therefore, to my torture; but rather, by your better and cooler judgment, ſoften the diſtreſſes of your friend

Altenburg.

Auguſta

Auguſta Marilli to the Baron.

FATHER! Father! my dear, cruel Father! have you really deſerted, and left us for ever? No, I am ſure you have not: I know you will come to us again, and ſoon; and then, Oh how happy we ſhall all be! *You* caſt us from your heart!—you never return again!—aye, thoſe who ſay ſo can have but little knowledge of you. Good God! how can people tell ſuch wicked lies? I ſhall really deſpiſe them for it.

And

And yet, Oh Heaven! my mother ſays it is true—ſhe ſays we ſhall never ſee you more—that you are married, and that your love for us has periſhed! Is this, can this be true? She alſo ſays that you hate us: do you indeed, *indeed* hate us? Very well, father—Baron, my mother now calls you: very well, Baron! we can both die; and then, you know, when the grave hides us, we ſhall not feel your cruelty.

Do as you pleaſe, Baron; do as—— Oh pray, pray come back to us! My mother has been deceived—I have been deceived; and your abſence has been neceſſary. But ſo very long—well, that may be accounted for; and

I know

I know there are not two people in the world that you love ſo well as your Iſabella and *her* and *your* Auguſta, for you have ſaid ſo a thouſand times.

My mother is coming; I muſt hide my paper, for ſhe would hate me if ſhe knew that I was writing to you; and ſhe is the only perſon who is dearer to me than you are—I think ſhe is a little more dear——no, no, ſhe is not.

* * * * * *
* * * * * *

Oh you have made my mother crazy! She is certainly diſtracted, and

and my terror will deſtroy me. I am afraid to look at her; her actions are growing more ſtrange, and her words I am obliged to ſhut my ears againſt.

"Auguſta," ſhe ſays, "curſe your father!"

"Madam—mother, did I underſtand you?"

"Curſe your father!"

"Oh no! I dare not."

"God—God will do it!" ſhe exclaimed; and then ſhe ſat a long time ſilent, ſtaring at me with diſtorted features. Something which ſhe had done to me before increaſed my fear, and I was riſing to fly from her; but ſhe took me in her arms, and having kiſſed

kiſſed me almoſt a hundred times, told me I was the only link that bound her to life. Then ſhe again relapſed into profound ſilence, and for a while fixed her eyes on your picture, which ſhe held in her trembling hand. She looked dejected—more mournful ſtill—ſtill more miſerable: ſhe ſighed, ſhe wept, preſſed the picture to her breaſt, and afterwards to her pale, quivering lips. Her paſſions again changed; her features ſwelled with indignation; ſhe gazed with horror on the painting, and throwing it into the fire, ran ſhrieking out of the room, and locked herſelf within her own chamber. I have not ſeen her ſince; ſhe refuſes to admit me, but

tells

tells me that ſhe ſhall ſoon be compoſed again.

Father, remove the anguiſh of my mother, or I fear I ſhall ſoon ſee her raving in chains. Remove the anguiſh of your Auguſta alſo by proving that the aſperſions of the world are falſe and malevolent—at leaſt convince her;—I want no aſſurances; for I can almoſt as ſoon believe that God himſelf were our foe, as that you, my dear parent, are.

How dull we were after you left us in the country! I neglected all my walks. The weather was gloomy, and the birds were mute; like inconſiderate

derate man, the little ingrates forgot to carol their praiſes to Nature becauſe a temporary gloom ſucceeded their joyous ſummer days. Oh ingratitude! we find thee every where; I wonder thou doſt not vex Heaven out of its patience.

Let me ſee—when ſhall I ſee my dear father again? I will give you three days, and I am ſure that is a long time. To-day is Monday—that muſt be one; then there is Tueſday and Wedneſday—and then on Thurſday—Oh my heart is beating with pleaſure!—on Thurſday I ſhall be in the arms of my father, and my mother's ſadneſs will diſappear!

I will

I will make ſome little arrangements for the day:—you ſhall ſee my improvements in drawing; and a piece, that I have juſt ſketched from my own imagination, I am anxious to place before you; it is a rude, winter ſcene, a wretched cottage, and two females of miſerable appearance, each bearing in her arms a ſcanty bundle of wood, and ſtanding near the door of the hovel. There is another object; I have introduced a noble looking man, richly dreſſed, and comfortably clothed with fur; he is gazing with compaſſion on the ſtrangers, and offering to the elder woman his purſe. But what do you think I have further done? I am ſure you will ſay it is

ingenious;

ingenious;—to the man I have given your countenance, copied with exactneſs from the miniature you left with us; my mother appears as one of the cottagers, and I as the other: and the reſemblance of each of us is ſo ſtrong, that I think you will be delighted with my performance.

I however fear there is a ſmall fault in the eyes of my mother—they are not equal to thoſe of the original; but you can compare them when you come to us, and direct me in giving them a darker ſhade. God bleſs my dear father till he meets his

Auguſta.

Baron

Baron Altenburg to Count Stendal.

SOON after I had written my laſt letter, I left Vienna, and with my lovely companion journied towards our country retirement, in which we have now been nearly a fortnight eſtabliſhed. It is indeed a lovely place; Nature has been profuſe in adorning it, and made it a reſidence where the philoſopher might reflect unmoleſted, and the poet quietly indulge himſelf in the beautiful excurſions of imagination.

But

But I have not yet diſcovered whether Solitude be the nurſe of tranquillity, or the ſubtle promoter of unhappineſs; whether ſhe lulls the turbulent paſſions to repoſe, or cunningly prepares them firſt for mutiny, and then for open rebellion. I am ſtill divided between hope and anxiety. In ſome moments a thouſand bleſſings ſeem within my graſp; but in others the tear-ſwoln chalice of grief, and the dark-ſhaded viſta of diſappointment only meet my eye.

The war of conſcience has not yet ſubſided: your letter, my friend, gave new vigour to it; and, till the hoſtilities of the mind are over, it

were folly to expect even a moment of eaſe. Man poſſeſſes but few fixed principles; he is an eternally deviating object: at different periods he has certain notions and ideas, which, bearing in ſome degree a ſimilarity, he fooliſhly calls rules: the fluctuations of his ſentiments are, if he acts with privacy, only known to himſelf; for his mind can always be an undetected monopoliſt, and thoſe who pretend to determine on his eſtabliſhed character, are abſurdly preſumptuous. In early life he may draw plans of future conduct, and for a while adhere to them; but the conſciouſneſs of the propriety of acting rightly cannot always keep him in the performance of

of it; he cannot reſolve himſelf to be what he wiſhes, and his perſeverance is hourly, nay, almoſt momentarily either ſtrengthening or relaxing.

The days of practical philoſophy are, I fear, over; and of thoſe which are ſaid to be paſt, conſiderable doubts and ſuſpicions may be entertained. A mere man of the world may ſometimes be deemed a ſage in his cloſet; but bring him to the light, and the deception will be wondered at. I was once acquainted with a profeſſed moraliſt, a lover of literature, who told me he was preparing to publiſh a treatiſe on the practice, univerſally and individually, of humanity; but I

afterwards diſcovered that he had the ſoul of a negro-driver. Another perſon, with whom I was for a while in habits of intimacy, would melt at the dramas of Schiller and Kotzebue; but in actual diſtreſs, I could have dug a ſofter heart from a quarry, or tore a better one from the breaſt of malice.

Man, therefore, knows little of himſelf, and his fellows know leſs of him. Such reflections as theſe, and the conviction of their being juſt, ſometimes ſpread a gloom over my countenance, give a pang to my heart, and make me fear the birth of hidden events.

I find

I find it is neceſſary, as well for the happineſs of my wife as of myſelf, that I ſhould not ſuffer any appearance of dejection to hang upon me. I yeſterday diſcovered her in tears, though ſhe endeavoured to conceal them: concerned, and even alarmed, I ran up to, and entreated her to inform me of the cauſe of her ſorrow, and alſo conjured her to baniſh it immediately if it depended on no very ſerious circumſtance.

"How can you, Altenburg," ſhe replied, "expect to ſee pleaſure in *my* countenance, when *your's* is ſo gloomy and clouded? For ſome days paſt I have obſerved it with extreme pain:

your frequent reveries, your abſence, and your muſings—all, all beſpeak anxiety; and there appears a reſtleſſneſs in you that I have imputed to diſſatisfaction: but of what? Surely, ſurely *I* am not the cauſe of your diſcontent?"

"Oh no, by Heaven!" I exclaimed, preſſing her to my heart; "Oh no, by Heaven, Chriſtiana!"

In ſoothing her I made uſe of a falſehood:—begging her not to ſmile at the idea of periodical affections, I aſſured her they actually viſited me, and that I had always found the approach of the autumnal ſeaſon very oppreſſive to my ſpirits. But I promiſed

miſed to bear againſt them; and in order to appear a more reaſonable being, I keep conſtantly in her preſence at home, and when inclined to walk abroad, I now always requeſt her to join with me, and to break the ſolitude. Still, however, I feel the weakneſs of my own deception; and though I ſincerely love Chriſtiana, yet in my heart poor Iſabella, poor Auguſta—I am leading myſelf into dangerous paths.

Previous to my leaving Vienna, I executed ſome writings which entitle Iſabella to an independence, and put them into the hands of my ſteward, deſiring him to wait on her, and

preſent them. On the back of the principal paper I have written with a pencil, "To Iſabella, and to Altenburg's beloved Auguſta."

I have not yet heard the event of the embaſſy of Grotz, but moſt fervently hope it has been ſucceſsful. If Iſabella ſhould be ſtill obſtinate, in ſpite of the love and tenderneſs of Chriſtiana, I ſhall anticipate a long winter of ſorrow.—Oh indiſcretion! though we feel no compunctions at the time of yielding to thee, what a black train of plagues, all the progeny of thy ſecret womb, and by ourſelves begotten, do we afterwards open our diſguſted eyes upon!

Altenburg.

Joſeph Grotz to the Baron.

MY LORD,

YOUR Lordſhip may probably have wondered at my ſilence in reſpect to the affairs that you commanded me to execute; but circumſtances have ſo happened, that till this time it was not poſſible for me to give you any intelligence. What I have now to communicate is by no means of a pleaſant nature. I however aſſure your Lordſhip, I have not wanted exertion in the buſineſs, though I have unfortunately failed in the completion of it.

The lady, whom you desired me to wait upon with the writings, has removed from her late place of residence, and with so much privacy, that it was with difficulty I lately traced her to an obscure lodging in the suburbs of the city. Having discovered her abode, and being desirous of relieving the anxiety of your Lordship as early as possible, I immediately went to the house, and begged permission to speak with her; which request, after some little delay, she consented to, and I was brought before her.

Oh my Lord! what a dreadful alteration in Madam, and in Miss Augusta, your Lordship's daughter!

At

At ſixty-five we are enfeebled both in body and in mind; it is not ſtrange, therefore, that my breath grew ſhort, and that I burſt into tears to ſee the eyes of the lady, once ſo brilliant, now ſinking into their ſockets; and the ſweet cheeks of her child without a tint of thoſe roſes which once over-ſpread them—all faded! pale and drooping, like a ſtorm-beaten lily!

She ſucked at the breaſt of my wife, my Lord; ſhe was foſtered in her infancy by the milk of poor Suſan: ſhe has ſince, till within a few months, curſed months! flouriſhed, and gambolled, and ſported before my eyes!

Pardon, therefore, the pratings and ſorrows of your old ſervant Grotz.

My Lord, Auguſta's mother has ſeen the writings, heard a full explanation of their import, and read the ſhort note addreſſed to her. Her anſwer was this :—

"The Baron knows my ſentiments—they are fixed, eſtabliſhed; he therefore muſt not, ſhall not trouble me any more. Henceforth I will owe nothing to him: were I friendleſs and famiſhing, paſſing by his door, or bending with burning thirſt over his canal, I would yield to death rather than take

take a morſel of bread from the one, or a drop of water from the other."

"So would I, ſo would I!" cried the daughter, claſping her mother's neck.

"You hear," ſaid my poor Lady; "tell your maſter this, and God bleſs you, old man!"

The ſame words were repeated by your Lordſhip's daughter, who preſſed my hand, and then went out of the apartment, leaning on the arm of her mother. I did not immediately leave the room—I could not—my nerves relaxed; but when they ſtrengthened a little, I collected the papers, and departed from the houſe, which is but a ſorry place for one who has long been

been accuſtomed to the elegancies of your Lordſhip's manſion. But to the heart of grief what is the difference between a palace and a dungeon? The letters which were ſent to your Lordſhip ſome few days ago, did not paſs through my hands, or they would have reached you earlier; but I hope they were of no great importance. Command in what manner the rejected writings are to be diſpoſed of by your Lordſhip's old and faithful ſervant,

Joſeph Grotz.

Baron

Baron Altenburg to Count Stendal.

STENDAL, there is no happineſs for me! I have, I fear, precipitated myſelf into miſery, from which there can be no extrication. The ſlave of paſſion, and the fool of impulſe has now nothing left to cover his extravagances but a ſorry repentance. Good God, what a part have I acted!—I look with wonder on my paſt deeds, and am ſhocked even by my preſent preſumption.

Count, read the encloſed letter; it is written by Auguſta, by my beloved child,

child, by the daughter of the abandoned Iſabella! Oh you know not how I have loved this girl! you know not how her innocence, her ſimple accuſations, and her ſweet ſenſibilities have torn my heart!

I have ſcarcely poſſeſſed my ſenſes ſince I received this letter; it has brought my depravities freſh into my mind, and caſt an ugly ſoil upon my nature. You are a father, Stendal—Oh how I envy you!—Had I, like you, been virtuous, like you I had been happy. I likewiſe am a father: I have children—yes, *children*;—but I gave them being merely to make them objects of deriſion, of ſhame,

and

and of poverty! I have been baſe beyond your imagination; and the curſes of my progeny are likely to paſs over my grave. I am a ſeducer and betrayer: in the exploits of the one I thought myſelf admired; in the baſeneſs of the other I find I am deſpicable.

Hear what my poor little girl ſays; how affecting, how pathetic!—Read, read, and think what my tortures muſt be. Be careful of the letter, and return it to me; I will carry it always near my heart: it ſhall be an eternal puniſhment to me for my ſins; and I will read it every night, in order that, as a penance, it may keep me anxious

and

and waking. What a ſhocking picture has ſhe drawn of her unhappy mother! Oh I ſee in it the delineations of inſanity! That beauty which I once admired, to be diſtorted! that mind which was ſo ſweet and ſtrong, to be overthrown!

Mark how my child pleads for my return; how unwilling ſhe is to believe that I *can* deſert her. She ſaw Monday, Tueſday, and Wedneſday paſs over; and on Thurſday—torture muſt have wrung the innocent's heart. Perhaps ſhe then, indeed, joined with Iſabella in curſing her father!

Do not you feel the force of the preparations that ſhe was making to celebrate my return—of the drawing that ſhe intended to place before me? The horrors of winter, the diſtreſſes of poverty, the relief of humanity—Iſabella and herſelf the miſerable women, I the adminiſterer of comfort—*I!*—She has, I dare ſay, removed me already from the ſcene, and ſubſtituted a robber, a murderer, or a beaſt of prey!

I have not yet heard from Grotz, in reſpect to the writings which I executed in favour of Iſabella. His ſilence alarms me; I cannot conjecture what is the occaſion of it: but the fidelity and

and integrity of the old man have been long known to me. After I had diſſipated my fortune, I was obliged to diſcharge the honeſt fellow; but on coming into the poſſeſſion of that of Chriſtiana, it was with pleaſure I reinſtated him.

Ah, my dear Count! you cannot conceive the difficulty of the part I am now acting: like a compounded character in a drama, I cover my baſeneſs with hypocriſy, and hide habitual vices beneath an indiſcriminate heap of artificial virtues. I have hitherto deceived my amiable wife; and pray Heaven the deception may continue till I ſhall become more worthy!

* * * * * *

Letters from Vienna are arrived—there is one from Grotz : I have read it, and my afflictions are increaſed ; for it informs me that Iſabella hides herſelf in an obſcure lodging, and that both ſhe and her daughter are reſolved to bend to the rigours of want, rather than receive from me the moſt trifling aſſiſtance. Obſtinate women, periſh then !—Oh no, no ! Iſabella, Auguſta, why will you not ſtill let me be a friend and a father to you ?

Chriſtiana calls me to walk with her. Count, were you to ſee this woman, you would admire her. Think me

me not licentious for wiſhing a plurality of wives; but in the diviſion of my love between Iſabella and Chriſtiana, the ſun would not bid good-day to a happier mortal. Aye, I know I talk madly; and confeſs there is at this time a great fault in my brain.

My wife calls again:—I come, deluded woman! Adieu, dear Count. My intellects want a new arrangement, and there is an oppreſſive ſickneſs in the heart of

Altenburg.

Baron Altenburg to Auguſta.

AUGUSTA, my beloved child! you muſt not deny me the comfort of writing to you; you muſt not prevent me from telling you that I am ſtill your affectionate parent. I have not had a moment's tranquillity ſince the arrival of your letter, which, on the firſt peruſal, filled me with indeſcribable anguiſh: to reply to you now increaſes that anguiſh; and I think I ſee my dear daughter regarding me with contempt and horror.

Be

Be patient, Auguſta, and hear me.

I am married: I can no more return to your mother—duty to my wife forbids it; we are therefore parted for ever! The connection that once ſubſiſted between us is diſſolved, and we muſt not expoſe ourſelves to the danger of any future meeting. Still be tranquil, child:—your mother is wild, and will not liſten to me; but to you I think I can ſhew ſome extenuation for my conduct.

Had I not acted in the manner that I have done, the ſad remainder of my life, Auguſta, muſt have paſſed in a common priſon; and my laſt breathings

breathings muſt have been within the damp walls of a dungeon. Could you, could you, dear daughter, have ſeen the days of age creep on your poor father in a place like that? Carry your eye to it, and to the ſoul-weary captive;—ſee his wants, his miſery, his deſpair! Relieve him—revive the ſickly flame of life—lead him again to the free enjoyment of the pure air; you cannot, you have no means. His fate and your own are combined; his ſufferings, his poverty, his dreadful wants, all attach themſelves to you. Alas, alas! Altenburg, Iſabella, and Auguſta are expiring; they grow more weak—weaker ſtill—they periſh! they periſh!

Such muſt have been our general fate; and what I have lately done could alone ſave us from it. I have not painted an unnatural ſcene, but ſuch an one, dear Auguſta, as misfortune would have preſented to us. To avert the impending evil, to reſcue myſelf from impriſonment, and to give comfort to thoſe whoſe happineſs was of no leſs conſideration to me than my own, I was compelled to change my ſyſtem, the reſult of which is now known to you and to your mother; and though ſhe refuſes to liſten to my reaſonings, I truſt that your more tranquil mind will feel for my condition, acknowledge the neceſſity of my actions,

actions, and pity me for being ſo cruelly driven to them.

Endeavour to ſooth the paſſions of your mother ;—plead for me ; tell her my ſufferings have been, and ſtill are dreadfully acute ; that my memory will never diſcard her, and that my heart can never wholly throw her from it. Purſue the ſubject farther ; talk to her till ſhe agrees to accept the writings which old Grotz lately offered to her ; and, if poſſible, get her to conſent that you ſhould quit her for a ſhort time, in order that you may come under the protection of your father and the Baroneſs, who is anxious to take you to her heart. This deſire

muſt make her appear amiable in your eyes; and her connections are ſuch as will probably enſure you the moſt conſiderable advantages.

Your mother has refuſed to comply with this propoſal; but as your elevation and happineſs may perhaps depend on it, I would have you employ your moſt forcible arguments to put aſide the haſty determination of Iſabella, from whom I would not ſeparate you entirely: for ſhe might, at certain periods, ſee and converſe with you, though to me ſhe muſt be ever hereafter inviſible. To meet were again to love; and to love were aſſuredly to be wretched.

Let

Let the neceſſity of theſe conditions do away the hardneſs of them. Soften the obdurate heart of your mother; accept the writings yourſelf if ſhe ſhould again refuſe ſo to do, and they ſhall be accordingly altered: and, dear daughter, pray, pray take the diamonds which Iſabella lately returned to me! In ſpite of your peremptory commands, I have deſired Grotz to obtain a private interview, and to preſent you the trinkets in the abſence of your mother. Diſcover not my intention to her; admit the old man, receive from him the jewels, and look on them as coming from him to whoſe heart you ever have

been, ſtill are, and while he breathes, will be moſt dear, moſt precious.

Attend to all that I have ſaid; obey me as far as you can, and let your affections be proportionate to mine. The Baroneſs will love you; ſhe has ſeen your picture, and is filled with a lively admiration. Come to us, though you return again ſoon. Admit old Grotz, and refuſe not the jewels. God bleſs you, child! God bleſs your mother!

Altenburg.

The

The Baroneſs of Altenburg to Miſs Meſſein.

I HAVE been long ſilent, but forgive me, my dear Charlotte; there have been times, you well remember, when you have fallen into the indolence of correſpondence, and when I have ſilenced all your excuſes with a ready and voluntary pardon, which ought now to ſmooth your brow, if it be ruffled, and cleanſe your heart of every particle of anger.

I told you in my laſt letter that I and my Altenburg were preparing to

leave Vienna, in order to take a view of our eſtate at F——; we accordingly quitted the former, and have ſince been reſiding ſome little time at the latter place, the natural beauties of which are heightened by a moſt luxurious and fruitful ſummer.

Bountiful Father of the heavens and earth! thou who ſheddeſt thy foſtering dews, who cauſeſt the bloſſom to open, the fruit to ripen into perfection, and the corn to wave on the plains, on the hills, and in the valleys, which thy myſterious hand formed from the ſhapeleſs maſs of chaos—Power of my adoration! were I to forget to bleſs thee in the morning, I were unworthy

to

to live throughout the day; or were I to neglect my oriſons at night, I ſhould be undeſerving of the protection of thy ſoothing ſpirits, who give to us in our temporary oblivion, the dreams of pleaſure, and the viſions of delight. Having made me what I am, with ſuch liberal endowments, never may the ſeeds of penury root in my heart! never may I, with criminal thoughtleſſneſs, withhold my ſuperfluities from thoſe who have miſſed thine envied bounties!

Charlotte, I really think I may, without vanity, ſay that I poſſeſs no inconſiderable ſtrength of mind; for I learn that my name has been abroad

of late, that the prudes have condemned me for marrying a libertine, and that much evil is augured from my temerity. And yet I have liſtened to theſe tales of idleneſs, theſe accuſations of folly, and forebodings of ignorance, without either pain or anger. To ſmile at impertinence is the moſt effectual method of cruſhing it; gravity merely provokes it, and anger only ſerves to give elaſticity to its ſprings.

Either the world, or your friend, is miſerably deceived in reſpect to the character of Altenburg; I think he has been rudely calumniated, and many of the vices which the ſelf-

ſinning

ſinning moraliſts of the times have been pleaſed to annex to him, my heart has willingly ſoftened into improprieties, which may yet be effectually purged away. I knew him not in the days of error, nor did I ſee much of him before I became his wife; but I did not unite myſelf to him without love: he planted that paſſion firſt in my heart, and his ſincerity and frankneſs rooted it moſt firmly. He gained me not by hypocriſy and canting, nor wiſhed to paſs himſelf as immaculate: he ſhewed his very ſoul to me; I deemed it a noble prize, and never may I repent the claiming of it!

Altenburg is ſeveral years older than myſelf, though the difference is not very conſpicuous, and the beauty of his perſon cannot eaſily be excelled; he has alſo a very ſuperior mind, and ſince our connection I am ſure it has been ſtrictly governed by reaſon. There are moments in which his tenderneſs almoſt overpowers me; and his language is of ſuch a peculiar nature, that I could almoſt perſuade myſelf Senſibility was his mother.

While I retain the love of Altenburg—and may that and life fly from me together!—let the loquacious few, who arrogantly call themſelves the world, arraign me as they pleaſe, and exerciſe

exercise their spleen even till it becomes vapid to themselves.

In my former letter, Charlotte, I made you acquainted with the connection that for many years subsisted between the Baron and an Italian woman of the name of Marilli, by whom he has a daughter of the age of fifteen or sixteen; and, judging by a miniature which he has shewn me, she must be a truly lovely girl. The mother has accepted a provision from the Baron, and is retiring to her native country. Being willing to take the daughter to my own protection, I hinted my desire to Altenburg, who instantly applied to the Signora for that

that purpoſe ; but could not induce her to part from the girl, of whom he is exceedingly fond.

This refuſal has, I know, given him extreme pain, though he endeavours to conceal it ; but as they will ſoon leave the country, it muſt be my taſk to bring him again to tranquillity, and my hopes of ſucceſs are ſtrong ones.

I wiſh the application of Altenburg had been attended to : his Auguſta would have made me a ſweet companion ; and I fear the ſentiments of her mother may be dangerous to inexperienced innocence. I believe the model of your heart, my dear Charlotte, is ſo much

much like mine, that I do not fear it will condemn the actions of your friend towards the former aſſociates of Altenburg, the elder of whom I pity, and the younger, though unknown to me, I really love.

The faſtidious ſentiments of many of my acquaintances actually make me ſmile, and ſome few of them have completely diſguſted me. You remember the old Baroneſs of L——; having no longer charms for admiration, youth for gaiety, or health for amuſement, ſhe has aſſumed the garb of a devotee, and become a profeſſed cenſurer of the prevailing habits and cuſtoms; and though, in days that are

paſſed, reputation vowed no longer to be her handmaid, her intimacy with the Margrave of B—— having aſſumed an unqueſtionable appearance, yet now ſhe would place her foot on the neck of Virtue, and caſt the ſhadow of prejudice on the face of Innocence.

She has been talking to me concerning my late connection, with matchleſs confidence; I reſented it with an unaccuſtomed ſpirit; and now, perhaps, the goſſip is going her rounds in Vienna, with my name and a bag of venom hanging on her tongue.

Our

Our German ladies have certainly many infirmities and bad propenſities. I wiſh my dear Charlotte would, to make their national pride and characteriſtic impertinence of ſtill leſs importance than they are, come to her friend

Chriſtiana.

Auguſta to Baron Altenburg.

HOPE had lulled me into a pleaſant dream; the moments fled; I awoke not: the illuſion was ſtill fair, beautiful, and the creator of it watched over me with delight. You have now rouſed me; the viſion no longer glows,

glows, and the forms which were moving gaily in it, have yielded to the intruſion of demons. Peace has wrapped her white robes around her, and fled; and Miſery, in her tattered ſables, and ſighing in the ſickneſs of her ſoul, approached near to me, ſaying, "Girl, thou art young, and not long ago thy proſpects were ſunny, though they now are diſmal. Let me take thee in my arms; live with thee forever; travel through life with thee, and be near to thee on thy death-bed. Come, here are garments for thee; ſuch weeds as theſe diſtinguiſh my followers from the offſpring of happineſs: come, quit thy pleaſant home; bring thy mother with thee, and let

us

us all ſeek the dark ways and flinty paſſages !"

Oh unbelieving fool that I have been! The preſent ſickneſs of my heart might have been leſs, had I ſhaken off credulity, and not ſo firmly relied on the virtue of man's nature. Scourges and unceaſing reproofs await the diſobedience of children ; but the inexperienced triflers muſt neither murmur, nor turn a dewy eye upon the oppreſſions and cruelties of their parents. Oh father ! ſo well did I love you once, and ſo much were you in my mind, that there have been times when, praying to my God, my thoughts (Heaven pardon me for it !) have

have wandered from my devotions, and fixed wholly upon you.

To make you great, I leſſened every other object. Where was there ſo noble a mind—where ſo good, ſo generous a heart? When you have been heaping kindneſs on me, what ecſtacy it was to break from you, and to exclaim, "He is my father—he gave me life! I owe my being to this beloved, this excellent man!"—It was in theſe moments pleaſure to weep; many a time joy has ſwelled my tears. Paſt, paſt, Auguſta, are thy ſenſations of delight!

My

My Lord, I did not acquaint my mother of the letter you ſent to me: I admitted Grotz privately; I ſuffered him to place before me the jewels which once ornamented me and the parent with whom I uſed to be happy. But I delivered them again to the old man, retaining only a ſtring of pearls, as a remembrance of a cruel father, whoſe deſertion could not make me hate him. Take them back again, my Lord—they would only mock my wretchedneſs; and if placed upon my boſom, like thoſe which lie midway in the mine, would ſparkle over a gloomy and comfortleſs abyſs. Take them, my Lord—they are in the poſſeſſion of Grotz.

I told

I told you that I kept a ſtring of pearls as a remembrance; but finding it a pain to look on them, I have diſpoſed of the baubles. One day, when my mother was not preſent, I put them for a little while round my neck; but a chain of iron had afflicted me leſs. I tore them from me, opened the window, and threw them one by one into the ſtreet.

A little beggar girl was ſtanding below; ſhe picked them up as I dropped them, and when ſhe had got poſſeſſion of them all, ſhe ſat down on the threſhold, ſmilingly untied a ſtring of beads, and having carefully inter-

mixed

mixed her toys and the pearls, went her ways on her ſupplicatory errand.

Oh that I had been the inſenſible little wretch! Perhaps her father gave her the poor ornament that ſhe wore; and perhaps, after a day of ſeverity and hard living, when ſhe enters her ſorry abode, *that father* may take her in his arms, and ſay to her, "God bleſs thee, poor child!" Oh that I were her, rather than what I am! And yet our worldly ſituations will ſoon be ſimilar.

My Lord, I never, never will leave my mother;—happy together, or miſerable together. I applaud the independence of her ſpirit, and will frame

mine

mine according to it. While I have a nerve in my arm, I will exercise it for her support :—it is true I have not been used to work for my bread; but custom, that will soon teach the Baron of Altenburg to forget the creatures who have perhaps too long checked his pleasures, and impeded his happiness, may also teach me to think without regret on the sorry alteration that has already happened, and on the poverty that is likely soon to wrap itself around me and my dear mother. We go from hence to-morrow. Farewel, farewel! and cruel as you have been, God guard you, father!

Augusta.

The Baroneſs of Altenburg to Miſs Meſſein.

CHARLOTTE, my dear Altenburg is ill—very, nay I fear dangerouſly ill! The firſt appearance of his indiſpoſition alarmed, and an increaſing fever has terrified me; it was preceded by a depreſſion of ſpirits that he was not able to conceal, though he evidently ſtrove to do ſo, and by an abſence of the mind that plainly ſhewed its internal diſturbance. Oh what can be the occaſion of it?

Seeing my agitation, he entreated me not to alarm myſelf unneceſſarily; but I could not be in any degree tranquil till he conſented to the attendance of a phyſician, which he was previouſly much inclined to diſpenſe with. The Doctor does not ſpeak very unfavourably of his patient to me, but to others I have reaſon to ſuppoſe he is leſs cautious: I know he entertains ſome ſerious apprehenſions, and regards the progreſs of the fever with great concern. Oh Heaven! if I ſhould loſe my Altenburg! Charlotte, there are a thouſand agonies in that thought!

He

He even ſtrives to laugh away my fears; but in that expedient I can diſcover the oppoſition of Nature, againſt whom he is weakly ſtruggling. Whenever I take his hot hand, he tells me he ſhall ſoon be well, and that to his affliction a child would ſcarcely yield. My continuing in his chamber, I perceive does not pleaſe him; his motives, however, for wiſhing my abſence ſpring from love and fear, which ſerve to fix me near his bed, rather than drive me from it.

He had not ſlept for a conſiderable time till laſt night, when, about nine o'clock, he fell into a ſlumber, and I laid myſelf by his ſide. He continued

to ſleep for ſome time, alternately quiet and diſturbed; for his breathings were frequently hard, his hands hot, and his forehead dewy.

The hour of midnight went over, and the ſecond of morning was come, when he ſtarted up, and looking around him, and then at me, enquired the time; on my replying to him, he gently chid me, and deſired me to retire to bed. I was obeying him, when he called me back, and preſſing his burning lips on my hand, "God bleſs you, Chriſtiana!" he cried; "and may his angels watch over you, as you, their ſiſter, have watched over me!"

"Heaven

"Heaven protect you, my Altenburg!" I exclaimed, as I went out of the room in tears, which I wiſhed him not to notice. I was in his chamber again early in the day, but found nought of comfort there, no happy alteration being diſcernible. On many occaſions I have hitherto thought that I poſſeſſed much fortitude and confidence; but to ſee my kind, my dearly loved Altenburg on the bed of affliction—God! perhaps on his death-bed—Oh how ſhocking is that idea! I have now no ſtrength, no courage!

Charlotte, grant me the requeſt that I am going to make:—come to me as early as poſſible; with all the

force of friendſhip I entreat you. On this ſpot I have no friends; and if any fatality be awaiting my dear Altenburg, not one conſoling voice would reach me while I gazed on him in his coffin, or dragged my weak limbs after him to the grave.

The Doctor is now coming from his patient, and I go to him trembling, and tortured by fears. Come, come, dear girl, as early as poſſible; and under this roof put up your prayers to Heaven for the life of the huſband of

Chriſtiana.

The

The ſame to the ſame.

YOUR letter, my friend, has reached me, and given pain to my heart. How concerned I am that, while I was preſſing you to come to me during the affliction of my huſband, you ſhould be cloſing the eyes of a mild and venerable parent, and weeping over the corſe of her who gave you to the world, foſtered you at her breaſt, and watched you with tenderneſs through youth to your late ſtate of happineſs!

Soon, ſoon may that happineſs return! Let the tears of affection and regret take their courſe, and then recal your former ſerenity to your boſom. The thoughts which attach themſelves to death may be gloomy; but thoſe which range to immortality, are bright as the clouds of ſummer.

Good God, what tranſition! To breathe oppreſſively, to ſtrive to raiſe the heavy eyelid, to touch the warm hand that gives no heat, and cannot be preſſed, to fall from the ſupporting arm cold, ſtiff, totally inſenſate;—then the ſpirit—wonderful eſſence! to burſt from its ſecret priſon-door, to aſcend, to travel through the ways of light on the

the wings of rapidity; and, unobſtructed, to call at the gate of heaven, ſaying, "Open, Almighty Father! admit thy expected ſervant: open, Almighty Father, and let me dwell with thee for ever!"

Oh Charlotte! I am thrilled with an inward rapture; my feelings at this moment are very ſtrange. If imagination has its victims, and I ſometimes believe it, I fear I ſhall fall a ſacrifice. Dry up your tears, my friend; remember Nature enforced not her demand till a long date, and even then did it with an unuſual degree of mild reſolution:—diſpel, therefore, the clouds of ſorrow; turn your eyes from

the body of your mother, and direct them towards her remaining family of love.

My Altenburg--Charlotte, he will live, he will live! My fears made me wild, but they were groundleſs; the fever that preyed upon the poor ſufferer is gone over; his mind is become tranquil, and nothing remains but a languor which will I hope ſoon diſappear. Gratitude has ever been in my nature: but Oh the gratitude that I am anxious to offer to the Supreme Being on this occaſion, flows inceſſantly, ſtill without any pomp of words or ſtudied form.

I ſeem

I ſeem to be newly created; I go about the houſe, ſmiling; I meet the Chaplain.—"Friend," I exclaim, "my huſband is recovered. Remember to whom your praiſes are due—to God! worſhip him for it." I make my ſervants aſſemble together, tell them of the happy change, and bid them rejoice;—then I fly to the chamber of my Altenburg; my lips fix on his ſtill pale cheek; I throw my arms around his neck, and place my very heart before him, in order that he may ſee the characters of love upon it.

Enthuſiaſt!—Well, be it ſo, while my enthuſiaſm is not injurious. Fare-

wel, my dear friend! Peace be to the boſom of yourſelf, and to the kindred mourners who ſurround you!

Chriſtiana.

Count Stendal to Baron Altenburg.

WHY this long ſilence, Altenburg? What is the cauſe of it? Have I, in my plainneſs of ſpeech, advanced any thing to give you diſpleaſure? If ſo, truſt me I am ſorry for it. There are ſome qualities in me which will, in their obſtinacy, diſcover themſelves. I have never been accuſtomed to ſtrangle my thoughts; and have ſo long

long indulged myſelf in the free utterance of every thing allied to truth, that in this age of faſhion and ceremony, when polite lying is thought an accompliſhment, and harſh facts are held to be odious, I believe there are thoſe who, ſeeing me approach them, would be ready to exclaim, "This barbarian muſt be avoided till he has gone through the rules of civilization."

Remember, Altenburg, I am a plain, ruſticated mortal; one who is little pleaſed with ceremony, or proud of riches; one whom ſtate and pageantry diſguſt; no cringer at Courts, no ſmiler at levees; nothing more than

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an unaſpiring being, who, for his happineſs, muſt diſcourſe with Nature, and ſuffer her to regulate his days in thoſe retirements, where winter makes him contemplative, and ſummer joyful; where love comes willingly to bleſs him; and where he, who is fond of prattling on little concerns, finds too much poverty of circumſtance to feed on.

The world has ſaid (it may ſtill ſay) Stendal is not old; he has rank, fortune, is married to a lovely woman, and his means are nearly princely; yet, for all this, he is cynical and mean; he retires from the ſphere in which he ſhould move, merely to accumulate

wealth; affects ſimplicity to cover his parſimony; keeps his wife in obſcurity through ſimilar motives; and has too poor a ſoul to ſupport that dignity which attaches itſelf to his name.

Oh ye ſorry obſervers! my happineſs is well ſecured againſt your malice, too remote for your ſarcaſms to reach; it is in the beauty and fertility of my demeſne, in the proſperity of its cultivators, in the ſmiles and fidelity of my dependants, in the careſſes of my ſweet wife and bleſſed progeny!—ſuch is the conſtitution of my happineſs; and in my retreats, heard are the effuſions of genius, and the deeper tones

tones of wiſdom, ariſing from enchanting poetry and divine philoſophy.

Altenburg, break your ſtubborn ſilence, and write to me. I need not repeat that you are in my heart, and that I wiſh the felicities of life upon you. I am going a little tour of friendſhip, and ſhall on Thurſday be at N——, where I would have you direct to me. Adieu! the beſt wiſhes of a friend attend on you and the Baroneſs.

Stendal.

The

The Baron in Reply.

THE cauſe of my ſilence, friend, is not that which you conjectured: though your truths have carried conviction, and your accuſations reached my conſcience, which went the greater way to meet them, yet none of them ſhould have ſealed my lips, leſt it ſhould have been ſuſpected that my taciturnity aroſe either from inſenſibility, or the ſpirit of obſtinacy.

I was preparing to write to you at the very moment your letter arrived; and have now to inform you that I have

have of late been deprived of the pleaſure of correſponding with you by a ſevere affliction. Yes, affliction, my friend; indiſpoſition is too forceleſs a word to expreſs my late ſituation; it may, indeed be applicable to the ſtate of my body, but is not important enough for the malady of my mind. The former is again aſſuming its functions, and the latter I am ſtriving to amend: there muſt be reſolution on my part—I find it neceſſary; and if my exertions be not great, my relapſe may be fatal.

The cauſe of all this internal pain and intellectual warfare is, as you may conjecture, in Iſabella; my miſery

ariſes

ariſes from her and from her daughter; and they have ſo oppoſed my projects, that my reaſon almoſt ſunk with them. You know my natural raſhneſs and impetuoſity: there have been moments when I almoſt curſed theſe women, but the imprecations were immediately ſucceeded by bleſſings; and I have ſhuddered at my own impiety, and called back again the diſcarded objects to my heart.

Iſabella and Auguſta are the voluntary victims of poverty; the fortune of the one, it is reſolved by them, ſhall be the fortune of the other; every valuable has been rejected; and by a letter which I lately received from old

Grotz,

Grotz, I find that even the greater part of their clothes have been packed up by them, and ſent to my houſe; and alſo that they have again removed their lodging, and with ſo much privacy, that nothing can be learned of them.

They will ſtarve! they will periſh! Iſabella and my girl will die in want and wretchedneſs, even while luxuries ſpread the board of the man who has deſerted them, and who once was, and perhaps, in ſpite of their proteſtations, ſtill is, remembered and beloved. Preſumptuous, unnatural thought!—Dearly as I have ever prized my daughter, her actual worth was not known

to

to me till I loſt her; for I knew not till of late that, poſſeſſing the ſimilitude, ſhe had the mind of an angel.

She has written to me a farewel letter; it is a compoſition that would melt the moſt iron-hearted mortal, and a ſavage parent might weep over it. Oh Stendal! that very letter laid me on a bed of ſickneſs; I read it till I was almoſt diſtracted; my heart ſickened, and nature was nearly ſubdued. A fever ſucceeded; but, thank Heaven, it did not reach my mind; I have therefore retained my ſenſes, and conſequently been very guarded in my expreſſions.

What a good angel is Chriſtiana! Divided as my heart is, ſhe muſt ever be a dear object to it; and if my love wants that fervour which it poſſeſſed when directed towards Iſabella, ſtill my attachment to my wife is tender, and firmly fixed. She has been my nurſe, her ſweet boſom my pillow, her eyes the anxious watchers of my reſtleſſneſs; from morning till night ſhe has attended me, and again from night till morning. When I lay faint and exhauſted, I ſaw the terror of her face, and heard the murmurs of her breaſt; but now I have, in ſome degree, regained my ſtrength, and ſince danger has left me, mirth preſides over her countenance; ſhe laughs, ſhe ſings,

and

and ſhews ſuch proofs of love, as, even in my preſent debilitated ſtate, awaken my admiration. Dear enthuſiaſt! never will I forget my duty to thee:—duty! the word is inſignificant, and does not reach my meaning.

I have kept her in ignorance reſpecting Iſabella; ſhe believes that my miſtreſs and daughter are gone back to Italy, and that they have accepted from me a competent proviſion. Amiable being! how few of the prejudices of the ſex obſcure her nature! She can pardon thoſe frailties over which at firſt ſhe ſighs; and her compaſſion and humanity are directed towards thoſe places from which ſome

women

women would faſtidiouſly turn, or look upon with affected diſguſt.

I dare not, at this time, truſt myſelf in ſaying any more reſpecting theſe unfortunate creatures: happy, happy ſhould I be, could I put the ſame reſtraint upon my mind as on my pen; but every effort that I have hitherto made to direct the former, has been totally ineffectual. The brain is an obſtinate republic, and it is difficult to account for the anarchy that breeds in it.

Dear Stendal, I feel a languor creeping over me. I promiſed my wife not to be abſent more than half an hour, and therefore muſt fold my letter,

and

and diſpatch it. But firſt let me wiſh you pleaſure in your tour of friendſhip. As you did not mention the name of thoſe whom you were going to viſit, I preſume they are unknown to me. There is a circumſtance of which I wiſh to ſpeak, relating to the village in which this letter will find you; it is——But I am faint, and cannot now proceed. Within a few days, perhaps to-morrow, I may addreſs you on a ſubject which I am, at this time, too weak and irreſolute to mention.

Altenburg.

The Baron to the Count.

YOU are a man of virtue; in the paths of rectitude you have been ſteady, never deviating therefrom: your purſuit has been happineſs, and you have attained it. I—but no parallels, leſt they ſhould appear tinged with ſycophancy. I am a poor extenuator of my errors, and can plead infinitely better for thoſe of other people than for my own. I am convinced of the fallacy of the doctrine, that a man's optics make not the imperfections of himſelf viſible: he may, I admit, for a while cloſe his eyes upon

upon them; but the time cannot be long before he muſt open them to a full diſcloſure of his deformities, whether he confeſſes it, or not.

The ſequel to theſe reflections may probably make me appear to you like a ſorry author, who having ſomething baſe to obtrude upon the reader, would fain attract him by ſome artifice in a laboured preface.

The letter that I wrote to you two days ago, muſt have led you to expect another. The ſubject, however, which I am deſirous of entering upon, embarraſſes me; and, fearful of your further cenſures, I have been much

inclined to do away what I ſaid, by ſilence. But to retract would not be honourable; and to proceed will be, I fear, to lead myſelf into merited diſgrace. Were I of the Catholic perſuaſion, I ſhould weary even the moſt patient confeſſor, whoſe abſolutions on my multiplied tranſgreſſions would neceſſarily come with tardineſs and reluctance.

About twenty years ago, and when I was not quite eighteen years old, I and a juvenile acquaintance, whoſe habits and idle propenſities were kindred with my own, retired from Vienna, and for the courſe of three months reſided in the village where you

you now are. We had a large ſupply of money, which enabled us to keep a more than ordinary appearance; and we lived in the extravagance which had become habitual to us. To prevent the impertinent enquiries of our friends, we aſſumed fictitious names; and as the ſpot was particularly favourable to hunting, and the ſeaſon being that of ſports, it formed our principal amuſement.

My diſſipated aſſociate had accommodated himſelf with a temporary miſtreſs, whom he brought from Vienna: and as I had neglected to do ſo, and poſſeſſed no more virtue than my young acquaintance, immediately

on our arrival at the village, I began to look for an object of similar gratification.

Vice, I soon discovered, was little known in the hamlet, and wantonness not to be found in it; still I saw women, young, blooming, and modest; and that to seduce any of them, was to be a villain, neither perplexed nor entered into my mind. Being an epicure in my sensualities, my heart bounded when I discovered a girl of about seventeen years of age, and of singular beauty, residing in a cottage at a little distance from the house which I had engaged: I marked her as my prize; my imagination rioted, and I was impatient

impatient to obtain poſſeſſion of the lovely ruſtic.

In the preſent days, as it was in thoſe to which I am now alluding, to ſeduce the affections of a wife, or to pillage her of her honour, is looked upon and pardoned frequently with a ſmile; and to decoy a miſtreſs from a friend, is applauded as an act of heroiſm and ingenuity. I was acquainted with the tenor of my companion's ſentiments, and knew the ſtrength of his paſſions; therefore, to effect my ſecurity, and forward my own vile plans, I kept him ignorant of my deſigns, and did not point out the charming cottager to his notice.

One day, taking advantage of his abſence, I ſauntered paſt the lowly habitation of the ſtranger, and ſaw her knitting at the door: her beauty heightened as I approached near to her, for as ſoon as her eyes came upon me, bluſhes roſe in her cheeks, and ſhe looked down on the ground, rather than on her work. This evident confuſion only ſerved to embolden me; and to ſubdue a timid woman was, I thought, more eaſy than to prevail with a confident one.

Her countenance was truly ſweet; ſhe had not the appearance of a ruddy ruſtic; there was a grace about her ſo natural and faſcinating, that I looked

on

on her with increaſing delight. Opening the wicket of the garden, I walked up to her, and with ſome degree of reſpect, aſked her whether ſhe had ſeen a lady and gentleman go paſt the cottage within the laſt half hour; ſhe anſwering in the negative, I advanced ſome further queſtions, and attempted to begin a converſation, when I found that, with her beauty, ſhe had no mean intellect, and that the ſweeteſt ſimplicity accompanied every word ſhe uttered.

We were ſoon, however, interrupted by her mother, who came into the garden; and as the old lady ſeemed to ſcrutinize me, I thought it proper

to retire from the cottage till opportunity better favoured my project.

Stendal, the recollection of the means which I uſed in order to bring innocence and unwary youth into ruin, at this moment chills my languid blood, and gives ſickneſs to my heart. Moraliſt, what muſt you think of your unworthy but repentant friend?

I contrived to ſee and to talk with her again on the following day: ſeveral other meetings ſucceeded. I forced her to accept ſome little preſents, profeſſed an attachment for her, and by a maſterpiece of diſſimulation, and after an acquaintance of two months, ſhe

ſhe gave her virtue up to me. Barbarian like, I ſeduced her with lies; ſwore that I was the ſon of a merchant, that I ſincerely loved, and would marry her, and that I would never, never forſake her. She yielded to me; our intercourſe was continued with privacy, and ſhe had no ſuſpicion of the deception that I had practiſed.

But ſhe had ſcarcely entered into the errors of love, before ſhe heard the upbraidings of conſcience, and felt the pangs of guilt. I had much difficulty in ſoothing her; and whenever I found her inclined to melancholy, I cheered her by talking of the union that

would ſoon ſubſiſt between us, which generally diſperſed the clouds of anxiety.

I found that the village prieſt was the friend of my lovely victim; that ſhe had been his favourite from her infancy; that he had given her an education, and in ſome degree improved her mind, and carried his attachment ſo far, as to perſuade her parents, one of whom was ſince dead, to name her after his wife, who had been recently wreſted from him. Neither of theſe circumſtances, however, impeded me in the progreſs of villany: my religious tenets were very weak; and if ever I felt any reſpect

ſo

for the ſacerdotal character, an intruſion of ſome of the glare of falſe philoſophy, which had led away my underſtanding, would almoſt inſtantly overthrow and deſtroy it.

I had not hinted at my amour to my friend, who now began to talk of returning to Vienna, as the means of prodigality were failing him. He urged me to accompany him; I aſſented to his requeſt, and an early day was fixed for our departure.

I now felt the pangs of ſelf-reproach; the cottage of poor Joſephine I could not look indifferently on; and when in a moonlight evening, and in the

abſence of her mother, ſhe ſtole to a little thicket, the uſual place of our aſſignations, and crept to my boſom, Oh then I began to ſuſpect I was a villain! Still it was but a ſuſpicion, and it abided not long with me.

Count, I will abridge my tale.

I left the ruined girl without taking any leave of her. Returning to Vienna, I ſtrove, like a monſter, to forget her; but it was impoſſible to expel her immediately from my memory, becauſe Vienna offered not ſo lovely a woman to my notice. The varied diſſipations of ſix ſucceſſive months could not wholly drive her from

from my mind; that time had elapſed when I wrote a letter to her, in which I encloſed a bill of ſome value: and, ſtill uſing the fictitious name of Roſtock, aſſured her that I ſhould ever love her; but on the ſubject of marriage I was very much guarded, if not wholly ſilent.

After waiting with great impatience for the courſe of a month, I received an anſwer to my letter, not written by Joſephine, but by the Prieſt, of whom I have before ſpoken; and being in a ſerious mood when it reached me, the edges of a thouſand ſwords could ſcarcely have mangled me more than the good man's words

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and intelligence. He firſt expatiated on the crime of ſeduction, and on the prevalence of vice; then painted the poor cottager in all the colours of innocence—colours which I had ſullied, innocence which I had defiled! He ſpoke of her confeſſion, her conſequent ſhame and agony; and ſhewed her to my imagination broken-hearted, and ſobbing on the boſom of her unhappy mother, in an advanced ſtate of pregnancy, and of ruined health and mind.

Had he preſented her to me at that moment, I could have exclaimed, "This woman has been injured by me; but as my wife, and with the ſincerity

ſincerity of love, ſhe ſhall have repa-ration."—Oh Stendal! I cannot now proceed; the next poſt ſhall bring you what I am at this time unable to ſend. You may never have felt the pangs of conſcience; I have—I do; at this moment they rack the breaſt, and almoſt diſtract the brain of

Altenburg.

The Baron to the Count.

IF I did not weary you, dear Stendal, with the beginning of my tale, I entreat that you will liſten to the remainder of it. The picture of the

the good old Prieſt diſturbed my imagination, and I thought myſelf curſed in being the cauſe of all the miſery that he had ſo pathetically deſcribed. Conſcience is never ſo ſuſceptible of any wound as of the firſt, becauſe there is no previous ſuſpicion of its being merited; every other attack on it is leſs ſevere; frailty grows more palpable, and the repetition of faults ſeems more deſerving of puniſhment: precautions, therefore, are taken againſt thoſe inflictions, to which at length it becomes habituated, and which ſink the acute ſenſe into comparative indifference and apathy.

Preparations

Preparations were then making for my going to Italy. My father was buſy in arranging my concerns, in reproving me for my former levities, and in entreating me to be more guarded and prudent in my future conduct. He was unwilling that I ſhould be much with my thoughtleſs aſſociates, and ſeemed deſirous that I ſhould ſpend with him all the intervening time till the day fixed for my departure from Vienna. This reſtraint I found highly diſagreeable, particularly as I had formed a project of ſeeing the poor unhappy cottager again, and of making her ſome reparation previouſly to my leaving Germany.

Six weeks after receiving the probing letter of the Prieſt, and alſo after having perſuaded my father to grant me a few days' abſence, I haſtened down to the village where I had led the fond and unſuſpecting Joſephine from innocence to ſhame. It was my intention to direct that a ſufficient ſum of money ſhould be annually paid for the ſupport of herſelf, her child, if it lived, and her mother;—when I ſhould come into the poſſeſſion of the expected fortunes of my father and my uncle, I wiſhed to do more for them; but till thoſe events happened, I meant to conceal my real name and quality, and again to uſe that under which I had become her ſeducer.

I knew

I knew that I could not attend to all the promiſes I had made her, that of marriage being included: ſuch an union was impoſſible; and greatly as I loved her, I believed her to be much too good, in ſpite of her frailty, to become my miſtreſs; ſtill I hoped to accommodate matters with ſome degree of ſatisfaction, though the idea of ſeeing her confuſed, and of encountering the eyes of her godfather, abaſhed me.

It was evening when I entered the village; the ſun had gone down, and twilight was travelling over the foreſt, which lay on the one ſide, and falling on the hamlet that roſe on the other.

Nothing

Nothing broke the ſilence but the ſalutations of the retiring peaſants, the repeated "Good night" of the little children, who were playing in the road, and the ſound of the bell ſwelling from the village church.

My horſe was tired, and I was glad to find myſelf ſo near a reſting-place. Calling to a boy, who was running along the path, I requeſted him to lead my horſe to the inn, as I wiſhed to diſmount, and to walk either to the cottage of Joſephine, or to the Rectory. The lad, however, told me that he could not oblige me, becauſe he was haſtening to ſee the funeral that was proceeding towards the church.

"Simpleton!"

"Simpleton!" ſaid I, "here is money for you. Whoſe funeral is it?"

"Poor Joſephine's!" cried the young ſon of Nature; "poor Joſephine's!" and he ran away from me with ſwiftneſs.

"Joſephine's!" I exclaimed; "not *my* Joſephine, ſurely! There may be many women of that name in the village; and yet—and yet grief may have broken the heart of my victim! My cruelty may have blaſted her in the ſpring of life!"

My heart was growing ſick with conjecture; I diſmounted from my horſe,

horſe, tied it to a tree, and followed the ſteps of the young informer.

In a few minutes I was in the church-yard: a ſolemn proceſſion was moving near to me; it ſtill approached —it came cloſe to me. I ſtared upon the ſlow-pacing and unobſerving attendants. Before went the paſtor, bending towards the earth, and ſighing as he paſſed.—"He muſt ſigh for Joſephine!" ſaid my frightened ſoul. Then came the corpſe: the wind blew the pall againſt my cheek; my ſhiverings increaſed—*If* it be Joſephine!—The firſt mourner followed; it was an old woman, who ſtaggered as ſhe walked; her hands were claſped, her eyes

eyes fixed on the coffin.—"Oh my God! Oh my child! Oh daughter, daughter!"

I heard her, knew her voice; it was Josephine's mother! I was supported by a tombstone, which was not colder than my body. I sunk into a short insensibility; and when I again unclosed my eyes, discovered no one near me. I rubbed my forehead, fearing a distemperature of my mind; but seeing light from the windows of the church, found that there was no delusion.

I went towards the house of God (unfit place for me!), and entered it. I did not suppose that I should be

recognized, as I wore a great coat, the collar of which I had pulled above my head; beſide, it was the hour of general ſorrow, not of curioſity; and the eyes of the Prieſt and the mourners were fixed on the coffin, ſeldom ſtraying towards any other object.

My vital powers became ſtill more cold and languid; and in the dark receſſes of the edifice, the optics of imagination collected all the ugly forms of fear.—"I have accelerated the death of an innocent young creature," I inwardly murmured; "I have given birth to a child, and been the inſtrument of tearing the nipple of its mother's breaſt from its little mouth!

mouth! I have planted ſorrow in the boſoms of the ſympathetic! I have ſtabbed the heart of old maternal fondneſs, and agonized the mind of one of God's moſt holy ſervants!"

I could not bear theſe quick reflections, could no longer look on the ſorrowing group; but, hurrying out of the church, ſoon after remounted my horſe, and rode precipitately from the village, regarding myſelf as a fiend more cruel and ſanguinary than the Devil when he was flying from the corruption that he had implanted in the ſweets of Eden.

Returning haſtily to Vienna, fatigue and heat brought on a fever, and my mind was almoſt in a ſtate of diſtraction. My father was alarmed, and entreated me to explain the cauſe of my malady and mental diſorder; but I was not to be brought to confeſſion, and remained with the ſecret in my tormented breaſt. My fever declined as rapidly as it had riſen, and I was determined on leaving Vienna immediately; and though my father wiſhed me to delay my journey for a ſhort time, I would not be thwarted in my purpoſe.

Before I left Vienna, however, I wrote, under the name which I had formerly

formerly assumed, to the minister who had buried poor Josephine.—"I have been guilty of a most serious crime," I said; "it presses on my heart, still more heavily on my conscience. I abhor myself—you must abhor me; and Heaven will, I fear, scowl on me for it. Man feels no compunction for little vices; he rarely becomes a penitent till his deeds have been monstrous. I entreat your forgiveness, good and holy man! Take care of the child of my poor Josephine; I will provide for her mother, and for her infant; and in the name of mercy, of charity, I entreat your pardon!"

I wrote in the fulneſs of my heart, with an agitated hand, and with watery eyes. The anſwer of the virtuous paſtor I need not repeat: he promiſed to be the agent in the buſineſs, and to apply my remittances; but aſſured me that, if the widow were not afflicted, and his pecuniary means were not much confined, neither the old woman nor the child ſhould ſubſiſt on the bounty of Joſephine's betrayer.

My journey to Venice could not diſburthen my mind of its melancholy; all the ſenſibilities which Nature had implanted in me, were in activity; and reaſon, for the firſt time, appeared to be

be breaking through the cluſtering levities of youth and intemperance. I ſhewed my mind to my tutor, and told him the ſecret that had long oppreſſed me.

"You think too ſeriouſly of this affair," he replied; "while we lament the effects of our actions, if we turn our eyes towards Nature, in her ſhall we diſcover the compulſive ſource of them. Thoſe principles, or inſtincts, which are known by the appellations of virtue and vice, are conſequences reſulting from the different ſprings of our paſſions: and I hold it to be equally reaſonable that a watch ſhould ſtop after repleted motion had been

given to its wheels, as that a man ſhould check the impulſes by which, at the very time of his formation, the ſecret artificer intended he ſhould be ever thereafter actuated and biaſed. Seduction is a chimera: I affirm it to be impoſſible that even an idiot ſhould be ſeduced. Cohabitation is the mere blending together of two wills; and if there is a mutual acquieſcence, how can a ſingle charge be afterwards made or ſupported? — Woman repines not at the act, but ſhe knows the prejudices and hypocriſies of ſociety; to keep herſelf above the waves of contempt, ſhe therefore puts on the cuſtomary garb of penitence, which, by the bye, is nearly threadbare;

threadbare; and turns her accuſations againſt him who only participated in, and acceded to a joint propoſition and correſponding inſtinct."

Youth is credulous: I liſtened to the voice of a man whom many had called a philoſopher; and though I did not immediately feel the force of his obſervations and ſentiments, yet a repetition of them, and a continuation of his theories afterwards ſtrangled the monſter Conſcience; and, expelling the gloomy ideas of my mind, I again began to ſeek for the pleaſures of the world.

Still there were moments in which I pitied poor Josephine, and mournfully reflected on her premature death; my tutor, however, told me that it was weak and absurd to wrap the heart up in sorrow, and voluntarily to cloud the intellectual brightness for a common state of mortality, to which I might myself be reduced before the re-appearance of the sun. I fell into the hands of a pernicious, dissembling villain, and my progress in vice you are well acquainted with: my follies my connections are known to you; my heart would sicken at a repetition of them.

An annual ſum has, till within four years paſt, been paid to the mother of Joſephine; the laſt tender, however, was rejected, though I have never enquired into the cauſe of it. It was not till lately that I diſcovered any beauty in virtue; and my ſandals are yet covered with duſt collected in the road of vice. I ſhould ſuppoſe that the Rector and the mother of Joſephine have ere now retired to a happier world. My ſon I never ſaw; his fate I never had the humanity to enquire into, and ſcarcely have I thought of him.

Dear Stendal, learn the ſituation of the poor lad, and apprize me of it.

What if he has been reared in ignorance? The event was adventitious, and he is not leſs entitled to kindneſs and ſupport. I would do ſomething for the ſon of the ſweet Joſephine; find him out; tell him his father wiſhes for, and will promote his proſperity; and alſo that a ſufficient ſum of money ſhall be advanced for that purpoſe, and be at his entire direction.

I beg you not to mention my name; you may, however, ſtate my quality, and acknowledge that the character I paſſed upon his mother and the humane Rector was fictitious. Yet, on reflection, I ſee not the neceſſity of this confeſſion; but do as you like, and think

think proper. The boy is doubtleſs ignorant, has been inured to labour; and, as agriculture has probably been his employ, I will purchaſe for him a farm, and at ſome future period caſt my eye upon the cultivator and produce of it.

Ah Stendal! I can never do juſtice on earth. My eyes are open to the worthineſs of Chriſtiana; but they are not ſhut upon Iſabella and her daughter.

Altenburg.

Count

Count Stendal to the Baron.

THE Rector is ſtill living, and every ſoul in the village rejoices at the prolonged exiſtence of ſuch an excellent being. The aſhes of Joſephine and her mother repoſe together; four years have paſſed by ſince the latter entered the grave, over which ſhe had long bent with an aching heart, and with an eye of ſorrow; the ruſtics ſpeak compaſſionately, affectionately of them both. Your aſſumed name is ſtill remembered, ſtill execrated! You know my love of truth; I flatter not—I tell no lies!

I have

I have ſeen your ſon. The village is very ſmall, and thinly inhabited. I ſought for your boy among the cottagers; and ſeeing a healthy lad following a plough, I aſked him whether he was the ſon of Joſephine.

"No," he anſwered; "I wiſh I were."

"Do you know him?"

"Oh yes, very well."

"Has he left the village? Is he ſtill living? Can you, young man, direct me to him?"

"Enquire of thoſe who are coming acroſs yon meadow," ſaid the labourer, abruptly leaving me.

I looked

I looked towards the place to which he had pointed, and ſaw an aged man leaning on the arm of a tall and elegantly formed youth. Concluding that the ruſtic had piqued himſelf on his cunning, and wiſhed to lead me into an embarraſſing ſituation, I did not intend to trouble the ſtrangers with an enquiry concerning a perſon whoſe inſignificance I thought had doubtleſs kept him from their notice.

But as I approached nearer, in the elder of them I beheld a venerable Clergyman, and in the younger I fancied that I ſaw Baron Altenburg ſtepping back to the age of twenty, and aſſuming a form and countenance more

more graceful, more impreſſive than they had actually been at that period of his life.

This was your ſon—the ſon of Joſephine—the ſcion that you planted, but which you neglected to foſter. I knew him inſtantly; aſtoniſhment poſſeſſed me for a moment; but I was immediately after affected as much as if the youth was my own diſcarded ſon.

I was determined to ſpeak to him, though I ſcarcely knew in what manner. Their ſlow approach, and my own tardineſs, enabled me to collect my ideas: ſtill, when I came cloſe to them,

them, your boy caſt upon my face a pair of eyes ſo exquiſitely bright, beautiful, and expreſſive, that I even feared to name to him the ſeducer of his mother;—I could not then do it. I ſuffered him to paſs, ſtrove to follow, but was unable; and therefore the opportunity of executing my commiſſion entirely failed.

To-morrow, however, I will ſee and converſe with him; and after my interview, will write to you again. The youth is handſome; and though I did not hear him ſpeak, I dare affirm that he is wiſe. The locality of the brain does not prevent it from extending its influence over the countenance,

tenance, which is often infinitely more eloquent than the tongue, the volubility of the latter being frequently poor, compared with the lightnings of the former.

Oh that my little ones may one day be ſuch as your boy now is! And would to God, Altenburg, you could be as happy a father as I am! I ſhall write to you to-morrow, and I doubt not but that my letter will be earneſtly looked for.

Stendal.

Baron

Baron Altenburg to Count Stendal.

HAVE you ſeen my boy again? Have you ſpoken to him? Does his mind accord with the beauty of his perſon? and is he——

Oh Stendal! how unjuſt have been my actions—how reprehenſible my conduct! Your letter has greatly agitated me—pleaſed, pained, delighted, and diſtreſſed me.—"What ails my Altenburg?" ſays my wife, while leaning on my ſhoulder.

"Nothing," I reply; "nothing, ſweet Chriſtiana!"

"Nothing?

"Nothing?—Ah now you are deceitful! Why did you ſtart on reading that letter? why fall back in your chair? why laugh? why, almoſt in the ſame moment, ſuffer thoſe tears to flow into your eyes?—and all this is nothing! Ah Altenburg! I will not ſtrive to rob you of your ſecrets, but I entreat you to be more careful in the government of yourſelf."

Dear Stendal! I cannot make my wife acquainted with this laſt diſcovery. My preſent conſequence is all derived from her; love, delicacy, and gratitude therefore ought to be ever directed towards her. She has pardoned many of my errors; and her affection

affection has made her blind to many of my ſerious faults.

Yet my boy ſhall be no longer neglected. My fortune is very great: ſhould my wife bring me any children, noble proviſion ſhall be made for them; but my newly-diſcovered ſon ſhall be independent, and Iſabella and my Auguſta—Ah perverſe women! why do you torture me by your ſecluſion?

I could almoſt quarrel with you, Count, for ſuffering your ſenſibility to maſter you when you ought to have reſiſted it; and yet your weakneſs certainly aroſe from the moſt amiable propenſity.

propenſity. May the God, whom the good miniſter ſo righteouſly ſerves, ſhower millions of bleſſings on his aged head, for the care he has beſtowed on the ſon of Joſephine and Altenburg!

Write to me inſtantly, dear Stendal; you may believe that I am impatient, but cannot tell how much ſo. Take my boy to your heart—preſs him to it ſtrongly; aſſure him that—— Chriſtiana is coming towards my room; I cannot repulſe her; ſhe is too good, too gentle, and too excellent; and ſhe muſt not ſee this paper. Farewel!

Altenburg.

Count

Count Stendal to the Baron.

THE generality of men are nearly alike in their conſtruction; Nature does not often evince any extraordinary partialities, though every vain creature of her hands fancies that thoſe partialities are actually to be found in himſelf. Sometimes, however, we diſcover ſome things which reſemble peculiar kindneſſes in the univerſal goddeſs; we ſee, or fancy we ſee, them even in infancy, trace them more ſtrongly in ripening youth, and find a full confirmation of them in the meliorated ſtate of man.

This

This trite remark has been drawn from me by the qualities of your natural ſon, which appear to me of the higheſt order. His education, I conceive, not to have been a mean one; he has a ſuperior mind and an excellent heart, though you may preſently be ready to affirm the contrary; ſenſibility ſeems to preſide over his ſoul, and I perceive that he is ſometimes guided by enthuſiaſm.

I have before ſpoken of his form and features; from his ſtatue a ſculptor might catch a graceful Apollo, and his face would ſupply exquiſite materials for an Adonis.

Blaming myſelf for my irreſolution on the appearance of the miniſter and his young friend, immediately after breakfaſt on the following morning, I went towards the Rector's houſe, with the intention of introducing myſelf in the beſt poſſible manner to the venerable old man. But in a meadow through which I had to paſs, and ſitting on a hillock, I ſaw your ſon earneſtly, and with apparent pleaſure, peruſing a book; and he being the more immediate object of my intended viſit, I made towards him, inſtead of ſeeking his diſintereſted guardian.

The

The uſe of language was at that time ſcarcely remembered by me, and the mann r of combining words abſolutely appeared a difficulty. The idea of bruiſing honour, and wounding ſenſibility, as well as that of pleading the cauſe of diſſimulation and cruelty (I have written the words, Altenburg), nearly again fruſtrated my deſign.

His eyes are almoſt magical; there is, not to ſpeak poetically, fire in the centre of each ball, generally beautifully ſparkling, but ſometimes kindling into the brighteſt flame. I advanced ſtill nearer to him, when he looked up to me, and on my bowing, roſe from the ground, and returned

my ſalutation with eaſe and gracefulneſs. I entreated him to pardon a ſtranger for abruptly diſturbing his mental repaſt, and that he would not accuſe me with impertinence if I begged to know his name.

With ſome little appearance of ſurpriſe, but without any intimidation or embarraſſment, he immediately anſwered, "Leopold Warndorf."

"So I had conjectured," I ſaid; "and you are the perſon for whom I was ſeeking."

"For whom you were ſeeking?"

"Yes. Will you allow me a few minutes' converſation with you?"

"Readily,

"Readily, Sir," he anſwered; "will you go with me into the houſe yonder?"

"With your permiſſion," I ſaid, "I will ſpeak to you here; for the preſent ſummer has not given us a finer day, and I am loth to loſe an hour of it. My motive for now appearing before you is an important, but a painful one. I have peruſed your face, young gentleman, and formed a moſt valuable opinion of your heart;—but to that heart, what I am about to ſay will, I fear, give a ſevere, though not a mortal wound."

"You alarm me!" he cried;—"I gueſs at it: you bring me ill news, perhaps fatal news of my friend

Charles! His iron-hearted parent has probably carried his rage and malice to their extremities, torn him from Elizabeth — impriſoned, murdered him! Heaven! ſpeak your errand quickly, Sir; for you have made me all anxiety."

Had you heard the varied tones in which theſe words were ſpoken, the chords of your heart would have thrilled as mine did, though Charles, his parent, and Elizabeth were ſtrangers to you. If this youth can feel ſo exquiſitely in the cauſe of a friend, Oh how would he have repaid the love and tenderneſs of a *father!*

As

As this thought was paſſing in my mind, he caught hold of my arm, and looked impatiently in my face.

"You are agitated," I ſaid; "be compoſed, for I do not come from the perſon of whom you ſpeak—he is totally unknown to me. I am deputed to addreſs you by——"

"By whom?" he enquired eagerly.

"One who has much injured you, and is anxious to make reparation; one who is ſtung by the recollection of his paſt errors, who loved your mother—who ſaid to me, "Go to the ſon of Joſephine, and bring him with you to the arms of his father."

Leopold ſhrank from me; he appeared to be falling to the earth, and I claſped his body to ſave him from doing ſo. Almoſt immediately, however, he recovered his ſtrength; but he looked with a conſiderable degree of wildneſs on me.

"And you are the friend of my father?" he cried: "he lives, and you are his friend?"

"He lives, and I am his true, his confidential friend, and have been ſuch many years."

"Then your countenance has greatly deceived me. We may look on corruption, and paſs untainted; but if we become familiar with it, we muſt neceſſarily

neceſſarily be infected by the putrid juices. The man to whom you allude, has been twenty years a villain; and if you have known him ſo long, you ought, Sir, to have forgotten him ſooner."

"You are ſevere!" I cried: "your father, indeed, has been unjuſt—"

"Unjuſt!—artful, cruel, and deſigning!"

"But he repents ſincerely. He has never ſeen you; his arms, however, will take you in, his breaſt cheriſh you, and his fortune enable you to execute any plan which you may form for your eſtabliſhment in life. Go with me: I muſt convey to him

ſome token of his former love for Joſephine."

"Love!—Sir, you ſhould have ſaid luſt. Carry ſome token to him! Why then, go to the church-yard yonder; you will ſee my mother's grave near the weſt angle of the edifice; at the head of it is a ſtone, on which is cut her name, her age—eighteen years! Dig up the earth; you may find a piece of rotten plank, a remnant of the ſhroud in which ſhe was buried, a bone!—carry theſe to him—Oh they will be fit remembrancers!"

"You talk wildly," I cried; "you have too much ſenſibility—indeed you have. You may obtain happineſs if you are willing to ſtretch out your

arm for it. You will hereafter love your father; you will be ever cherished by his affections."

"And if I were to go to him—and if he were to smile on me, which I cannot wish for, would not every gross tongue be ready to exclaim, 'How kind he is to the bastard!'—I knew not till now that I had a father. Leave me, Sir; Oh you have interrupted my tranquillity!"

My heart melted; he burst into tears; but in a minute, with indignation, he wiped them away.

"I can listen to you no longer, Sir," he cried; "and I must not be

rendered contemptible by my weakneſs. But perhaps I have—I hope not—I thought not of it before—perhaps I have been talking with the actual ſeducer of Joſephine?"

"No, by Heaven!" I exclaimed; "but if you were my ſon, I ſhould with pride acknowledge you."—He bowed.—"Your father," I continued, "will do the ſame; and the prejudices of ſociety you will ſoon diſregard. The levities of my friend are gone over, and virtue and honour are now ſtationed in his heart. He is a man of birth, of rank——"

"Of birth, of rank!"

"Yes,

"Yes, he has a long line of anceſtors, a high ſtation in the world, and his name is ——"

"Good day to you!" he ſaid, abruptly leaving me.

He would not be recalled, but ran into the houſe, leaving me ſurpriſed and embarraſſed, perhaps a little offended. I went back with diſappointment, ruminated all the day and half the night on the ſingularity of your ſon's conduct; and this morning received from him a note which I now tranſcribe.

"Secluded

" Secluded as I have been, retired as I have lived, and little as I know of the world, ſtill I am not altogether ignorant of the forms of ſociety. I am awkward in apology, for the language of faſhion is not much known by me; but I entreat Count Stendal, for ſuch I have diſcovered is the gentleman who took the pains of converſing with me yeſterday, to pardon me for ſome harſh perſonal reflections which I recollect I then ſuffered to paſs from me. The abruptneſs of the interview, the aſtoniſhment that ſeized me, and the pangs of my heart, made me almoſt frantic. My ſentiments, in regard to your character, are ſoftened, are changed; but the deſtroyer of my

mother.

mother muſt ever be abhorred by me. If you reſpect the peace of the human mind, if the happineſs of a fellow-creature be dear to you, attempt not to ſee me again: and I conjure you, by every thing that is holy, never, by words or writing, endeavour to make the name of my father known to me, for I know not what my paſſions might induce me to act. Convey to him, my Lord, the incloſed letter; and forgive the paſt rudeneſs of

"*Leopold Warndorf.*"

Thus you ſee, Altenburg, ends my embaſſy. I ſhall offer no additional reflections

reflections of my own, no advice; you must hereafter determine for yourself, and as you may think proper. Leopold is an uncommon character; and I have written, without remark or comment, the very words which were spoken by him.

The old Rector is, I hear, confined to his chamber, and his grateful boy tenderly soothing the infirmities of age. I am obliged to go from hence to-morrow; and were my continuance here to be prolonged, I do not think I should venture to speak to your son again. But I shall never forget him! If I condemn a part of him, my admiration will be insufficient for the other part.

part.—Adieu! I feel moſt ſenſibly for you, my dear Altenburg.

Stendal.

To the Perſon who twenty Years ago aſſumed the Name of Roſtock.

I HAVE requeſted Count Stendal to convey this letter to you—to you, who, aided by the laws of Nature, brought me into exiſtence: thoſe laws demand that, in ſpeaking of you, I ſhould call you by the name of father—a name which has often thrilled me when I heard it come from the pooreſt peaſant, from the ignorant who knew not the meaning of a hundred dif-

ferent

ferent words; but in pronouncing it myſelf, it ſtabs my heart, compreſſes the paſſage of my throat, and conveys a frightful ſound to my ears.

Can I for a moment think you were ſerious in deputing the Count to bring me before you; or that, after your heart has been for ſo long a period incaſed with ice, the ſtranger ſun-beams of humanity ſhould thaw any of its frozen ſprings? I will not believe it.

Suppoſe I admit the inclination, and reject the impulſe? Thus then, I account for it.

In

In an hour of mirth, when the feelings of no individual were regarded by you—when the prurient ſenſations of your own heart made you indifferent to the aches and contortions of others—when your goblet ſparkled to the eye, and the fumes of your potent libations were mounting, and creating a wild revelry in the brain—when, perhaps, a group of noiſy Bacchanals laughed around you, you thus addreſſed the Count :—

"When you paſs through the village you have juſt mentioned, and which I had almoſt forgotten, enquire for a boy of the name of Warndorf. Nearly twenty years ago, I gained the heart

heart of a poor country girl, who, I believe, within a twelvemonth died, leaving behind her this male baſtard. Nay, do not laugh ſo loud, gentlemen, for there is nothing uncommon in it; though I confeſs all theſe things are a little whimſical. If the cub be living, Count, I will humanize him; and if the ſeal of ſtupidity be not too fatally preſſed upon his brains, he ſhall have the management of my hounds, and perhaps ſometimes take the end of my table."

Nature! Nature! Nature!—goddeſs bounteous and beautiful! Were I to live a thouſand years, my firſt debts of gratitude could never be paid.

Thou

Thou ſaweſt me helpleſs and abandoned, left by a dead mother, and forſaken by an unnatural father! but thy animating and inſpiring breath came upon me from the woodlands and foreſt haunts; thou gaveſt a vigour to my body, and a ſpirit to my ſoul; one of which affliction has never aimed at—the other, exquiſite gift! has been often ſubdued by the wrongs of my loſt parent, but never ſhall be affected by the hypocriſy and cruelty of my living one.

My Lord, I am not for your purpoſe. You murdered Joſephine, and I will avoid you with the greateſt caution. Your name, your actual quality,

lity, and your fortune are alike unknown to me, and may they be ſo for ever! You deceived my mother with a lie—a complicated, deſpicable lie! and Leopold will be ever wary of your artifices.

You told her you would marry her; you told her you were a merchant. Thinking you might ſtill probably be ſuch, ſometimes in an evening, when the grave of Joſephine was beneath my eye, a ſtorm has riſen, clouds have collected, winds roared, and lightnings darted athwart the dreadful face of heaven: I have gone home, ſlighted my food and my bed, and alone in my chamber heard the increaſing roar of the

the elements. It has filled me with a ſenſation of pleaſure: what ſtruck others with a panic, gave a warmth to my ſoul; and while each ſhuddering individual has thought only of his ſolitary ſelf, I have been almoſt unconſcious of my own exiſtence, and filled with the idea of my father.

"His ſhips, the greateſt part of his treaſures may," I have ſaid, "be toſſing amid the hollows of the frighted ſea; the huge waves ſweep away the cables and the anchors; the blaſts tear the ſhrouds, and ſnap the cordage; the crew ſink into deſpair, and the black horrors of ſurrounding rocks frown upon their terror-ſtricken eyes.

He

He is among them! *he* is the ſaddeſt of the ſad!—Retributive Providence! let his veſſels divide, and his riches ſink to the unſearchable bottom of the ocean! Drench him in the billows; carry him, ſhuddering, half way down to death and darkneſs, and raiſe him, hopeleſs of life, on the higheſt waves! Fill him with fears, and plunge him in a thouſand horrors; but ſpare his wretched life, that he may hereafter have calm hours for repentance and contrition!"

Was this language unnatural? Think from whom it proceeded; think alſo of your former actions: reflect on the ſtrength of many of the paſſions

paſſions which Nature gives to us, and of the peculiar circumſtances on which I had to ruminate. I am not inhuman; mine is not a ſavage heart. All God's creatures are dear to me, except my father and thoſe whom vice diſtinguiſhes.

My hiſtory is a ſhort one.—After my mother was buried, I became the care of her poor, old, heart-broken parent, who paſſed her hours in ſighing for her dear Joſephine, and in ſobbing and weeping over her infant's cradle. I afterwards had the breaſt of a healthful nurſe to cling to and thrive upon; and I did thrive. The firſt things which I remember are the ſmiles

and the kindneſs of the Clergyman of the pariſh, who was the godfather of my injured mother; and my tongue cannot expreſs what he has ſince been to me. God will give him his ultimate reward.

He educated and made me what I am; he has taught me how to be happy, and his examples ever coincide with his precepts. When he dies, and the melancholy day is, I fear, very near, I ſhall poſſeſs his little property: it will be enough for a good and virtuous man; and when I caſt away that character, may the inſufficiency drive me even to the den of wretchedneſs and famine!

I was

I was at an early age informed of the circumſtances of my birth, and they no longer make me bluſh. The mother of Joſephine was for a long period ſupported by the ſeducer, the murderer of her daughter; affliction lay upon her for fifteen years, and during the laſt five of her exiſtence ſhe never left her bed. Miſerable creature! who brought thee to this ſtate of wretchedneſs? Had ſhe not accepted your money, ſhe muſt have periſhed in want.

But after her death, and when the next ſecret payment was tendered, Oh I was blaſphemous!—God pardon me for it! I thought I could have

trampled on my father's heart, as I did on his proffered gold. He could provide provinder for his horſe, could chaſtiſe his groom for not giving it good attendance, could admire, and almoſt love it; but he thought it enough to offer his ſon bread; his happineſs, his education, his morals were nothing! Had my body feſtered on a gibbet, my father would, unpitying, have looked on it, execrated my vices, and ſwore he had done his duty!—Oh my ſoul ſickens!

I have ſaid enough. I hope I ſhall ſoon forget all that now agitates me—forget that you ever made a claim on me; all then will be well again. My life

life was, before this interruption, beautifully ſerene; and this little ſtorm muſt not ruffle all my ſummer days. My ideas and reflections will, I truſt, hereafter be calm and unimpaſſioned; and perhaps, at ſome period not very remote, I may ceaſe to curſe the ſeducer of my mother, though I ſhall never bleſs him. Think not that you have in me a ſon; for that name I ſhall ever renounce, and ſtart from.

Leopold Warndorf.

The Baroneſs of Altenburg to Miſs Meſſein.

OH, I hope I have not been deceived, Charlotte! I hope what I lately regarded as beautiful realities were actually ſuch, and not the exquiſite viſions which the mind will ſometimes throw before the faſcinated eye.

Did I not deſcribe to you my happineſs, paint to you my felicities, tell you I was the moſt joyful, the moſt animated creature of the earth—that Altenburg was nothing leſs than the ardour

ardour of his Chriſtiana could wiſh him to be?—Yes, I remember that I ſpoke to you of all theſe things, and cannot ſuppreſs my ſighs when I remember it.

From this you will infer that I am unhappy: well, perhaps I am; and perhaps I ought to be ſo for my fears, my ſuſpicions, and my unjuſt ſurmiſes. But what magician can ſtrangle the fretful offspring of the brain? Thought will not be impeded in its progreſs; and the human mind, whether agitated or tranquil, I muſt ever conſider as a democracy.

I find, Charlotte, that I have been wrongly educated:—my preceptors were too ſoft to me; I have been led into a maze of ſenſibilities which attack me at every turning; they infuſe each moment a poiſon into my ſoul which often thrills me with a delicious but dangerous ſenſation, and frequently ſhakes me almoſt to annihilation.

I will alter all theſe things; I muſt—it is not too late; and I will hereafter ſtrive to direct myſelf by new ſyſtems and by more determined rules. I am, I believe, too nicely ſuſpicious; I muſt indeed be ſo when I fancy that Altenburg loves me not: and yet I have

have fancied this, though I bluſh, as I ought to do, at my confeſſion of it. The whole ſtore of my affections I joyfully ſurrendered to him; and if he returns me only half of his own, can I be otherwiſe than unhappy?"

Let no one ſmile, or tax me with enthuſiaſm, or dare to call me a rhapſodiſt when I declare that my love for him is infinite! I feel it as a friend, as a wife, as a miſtreſs; it is the chief paſſion of my ſoul, and I pour it upon him ſometimes with ſmiling, and often with tearful eyes;—tearful! yes—joy is ſuperlative when it comes from a humid ſource.

"And does he fly from your embraces? does he disregard your smiles? is he sated with joys which he thinks too liberally offered—offered without being demanded, rather than granted on solicitation?"—Ha! are not these your questions, Charlotte? Though you are so many leagues distant, methinks I hear your voice.—God shield me from these thoughts! My suspicions will undermine my reason:—*my* suspicions! no, they are your's, Charlotte; but they are unjust, indeed they are. Take them to yourself, dear girl, and recant as I do: let me never hereafter think that I had them for a moment in my brain.

* * * * *

I am

I am much inclined to tear the paper on which I have been writing. No, it ſhall paſs; it will ſerve you, Charlotte, as a ſpecimen of my talents for romance. You will laugh over it as I have done; though few people can be ſportive with their own errors and abſurdities, I proteſt I have been ſo over mine.

I certainly have freed myſelf from a ſtrange humour; its ſingularity ſurpriſes me, and I wonder that I ſhould ever fall in ſuch an one, ſo degrading to myſelf—its conſequences ſo injurious to my beloved Altenburg. I aſk your pardon for having forced the monſters of ſpleen and diſcontent into

your company, and promiſe to ſhew myſelf to you hereafter as a more rational and conſiderate being. I proteſt I am not only angry with, but alſo aſhamed of myſelf: I have told you already that I have laughed over my own folly, and muſt confeſs that I have likewiſe wept over it.

Many times have I been on the point of caſting myſelf at Altenburg's feet to implore his pardon; but it may be better to conceal the weakneſs of my heart and underſtanding. I have, however, ſobbed out my girliſh ſorrows on his beloved breaſt, and been hypocrite enough when, with a ſoul-diſſolving voice, he has ſaid, "For God's

God's ſake, my dear wife, tell me from whence ariſes this diſtreſs!" to impute my unjuſtifiable ſorrow to a remote and inconſequential cauſe.

Charlotte, my grief has been ſelf-impoſed, and my pains were not more ſevere than I merited. All my concern has been excited by an impertinent curioſity, and by ſome abſurd remarks on the countenance of my huſband. Becauſe he received a letter which ſtartled him, and becauſe my too ſcrutinizing eyes diſcovered a few contractions in his face, I muſt take into my boſom a large ſhare of multiplying doubts, and conduct myſelf

myſelf more inconſiderately than I ever did at the age of thirteen!—Strange, miſguided, infatuated Chriſtiana!

Surely I was not till lately a verſatile character. That I am ſuch now, even to a degree of abſurdity, this letter will probably evince. Pardon, however, dear girl, the errors of your friend, of which no one can be ſo truly ſenſible as herſelf.

Christiana.

The ſame to the ſame.

THE quiet of myſelf and of Altenburg was interrupted yeſterday by the appearance of the old Baroneſs of L——, who is going on a viſit about ten leagues from Brinn. She had neceſſarily to paſs our chateau; and I was walking with my dear Altenburg over the grounds, holding ſome of the tendereſt converſation ſince our marriage, when we were met by the Dowager. You know I do not eſteem her, that I think her garrulous and highly cenſorious; and if you recollect the manner in which ſhe talked to me

at

at Vienna, and my reſentment on that occaſion, you will perhaps be ſurpriſed that ſhe ſhould ever ſeek another interview with me.

But there are women whom no circumſtance whatever can abaſh. Her Ladyſhip was perfectly at eaſe; ſhe addreſſed both the Baron and me without any embarraſſment, and declared herſelf extremely happy in meeting us, though the rencounter was owing to chance alone.

The wheel of her carriage had broken within a league of the chateau; and on learning that we were then reſiding there, ſhe thought ſhe could

ſolicit

ſolicit of us the hoſpitality of a night, and till the vehicle could be put into a proper condition for travelling. Altenburg gave her a polite welcome, and I followed his example, though the eyes of my huſband declared that he thought me unuſually ceremonious. I have never acquainted him with the nature of the laſt interview between me and the Baroneſs; did he know what ſentiments ſhe then expreſſed relative to him, he would doubtleſs catch ſome of my reſerve, and alſo act upon it.

Our viſiter's tongue was, till we ſeparated at night, in conſtant activity; her anecdotes tire with their multiplicity;

multiplicity; her remarks are ſevere, often unjuſt, ſometimes indelicate: and having laſhed the vices of ſociety, ſhe concludes with thanking Heaven that ſhe has no ſuch propenſities. She is proud of what ſhe now pretends to be, and has no recollection of what ſhe was.

I muſt own ſhe poſſeſſes a conſiderable degree of diſcrimination in ſome particulars; and this morning ſhe ruffled me very much. After breakfaſt my Lord went out, and the Baroneſs accompanied me to my dreſſing-room;—ſeating herſelf near the toilet, ſhe looked earneſtly in my face,

face, and ſmilingly held out her hand to me.

"I perceive," ſhe cried, "that you are yet harbouring an idea of things which are paſt; you have not forgiven me for what, in the warmth of friendſhip, I ſaid to you at Vienna; your formality to me declares it. You muſt give me your pardon for the unintentional offence; you muſt not bear enmity any longer about your heart; aſſure me that you will not, my dear Baroneſs."

In the preceding minute there certainly was cauſe for her ſuſpicions; but it fled on the inſtant, and her words,

words, and her peculiar manner of ſpeaking touched me ſenſibly; and taking the hand ſhe proffered, I aſſured her that her ſurmiſes were entirely groundleſs.

"I rejoice then," ſhe cried, "in my deception, and in the afternoon ſhall purſue my journey with a greater degree of pleaſure and ſatisfaction. Yet how much would that pleaſure be increaſed, if I were to depart with the aſſurance of your being happy."

I ſtarted; my face glowed, and I looked ſtrongly at her.—"If you were to depart with the aſſurance of my being happy!" I exclaimed; "good Heaven!

Heaven! am I not ſo? Do you doubt it?"

"Ah no!" ſhe replied, "I have no doubts: mine is an unpleaſant confirmation. I proteſt your ſituation creates an intereſt; your infelicity excites regret, it does indeed. Dear lady, what can thus diſturb your peace?"

"You aſtoniſh me," I cried, "by your conjectures! I aſſure you I am moſt truly happy."

"Ah!" cried the Baroneſs, ſhaking her head, "thoſe who poſſeſs true ſenſibility are loth to make any perſon uneaſy by recounting their ſorrows. *You* happy! would to God you were! You have, ſince I came hither, been acting

acting with a delicate hypocriſy: you ſmile, you laugh, you talk, and attempt to appear as if all were tranquillity and joy in your heart. But I have obſerved you with a friendly earneſtneſs. The tide of your blood is ſtrangely irregular; for it ruſhes into your cheeks, and then rapidly forſakes them, leaving them almoſt deadly pale. You often fix your eyes on a particular object; they moiſten even while you are ſmiling: and when you join in a calm common converſation, your voice falters, and you are in an abſolute ſtate of trepidation."

I knew that ſhe deſcribed me as I actually was, but had thought

myſelf ſecure in my follies, and was vexed by her remarks, though I endeavoured to cruſh them with a laugh.

"Nay, this is ſtill worſe, my dear young friend," ſhe continued; "theſe tones are far from being natural; and your preſent mirth is an *effort*, not an *impulſe*. I aſk for no confidence, but would entreat you to be more attentive to your health and happineſs. Believe me you are ſtrangely altered of late; your new complexion really aſtoniſhed me when I met you yeſterday. You have a beautiful ſeat here; the building is noble, the grounds are delightful;

delightful; but pray is not the ſituation rather unwholeſome?"

"I have never heard it ſo called," I replied, in ſickneſs and confuſion; "my own opinion was always contrary."

"Your own opinion, I fear," ſhe ſaid, looking more earneſtly in my face, "your own opinion, I fear, has been wrong. And then, my good friend, the Baron—Heaven, what a melancholy change!"

"Good God!" I exclaimed, incautiouſly, "are then my ſuſpicions true? Tell me, Madam, does my Lord *really* look unwell?"

"Very much ſo, very much ſo indeed!"

"And

"And—does he appear to you unhappy?"

"It ſtrikes me that he is *moſt* unhappy: a ſecret miſery ſeems to prey upon him; and yet I dare ſay you are in his confidence?"

"Oh no, I am not!" I cried; "he places no truſt in me: if he be mentally afflicted—"

"He certainly *is*."

"Then," I replied, deeply ſighing, "the cauſe is unknown to me."

"Strange!" cried the Dowager, "very ſtrange! that recently married to a woman who (I compliment not) was ſo extenſively admired and ſolicited, he ſhould ſink into viſible diſtreſs and melancholy, without aſſigning

any cauſe for the change—it is moſt extraordinary! I knew the Baron almoſt twenty years ago, and happened to be at Venice when he firſt became acquainted with——Bleſs me! when he firſt appeared, and was known in that delightful place. He met with admiration every where; a conſtant ſmile ſat upon his face; and when in motion, he diſplayed the airy graces of a Mercury."

"I have heard," I replied, "that he was of a lively diſpoſition."

"Lively diſpoſition!" ſaid the Baroneſs; "he was truly the ſon of vivacity, the poliſhed mirror of elegance; and till a little while, a very little while, he has not abated a ſcruple of

of his faſcinating eaſe and gaiety. But the change in him is more alarming than that which I have diſcovered in you, my dear young friend;—paleneſs, fluſhings, viſible anxieties, and unſeaſonable muſings! I hope his Lordſhip will not long continue in a ſtate which appears to me actually alarming."

I could not bear to hear any more; beſides, I began to ſuſpect ſome unfriendly deſigns in the woman who ſo ingeniouſly tortured me; I therefore left her, and have ſince been writing to my dear Charlotte. I am, I believe, much too credulous. The Baroneſs, I am perſuaded, wiſhes to vex me;

but indeed Altenburg is unhappy, and I conſequently am the ſame. I had regained much compoſure; but the remarks and inſinuations of this pretended friend have diſordered me again.

* * * * *

What am I to think of the conduct of my huſband? Dear friend, what am I to think of the pain and myſtery of my Altenburg?

Politeneſs would not allow me to be long abſent from the Baroneſs; therefore I put aſide my pen, which had almoſt run before my thoughts, and met her in her dreſſing-room: we

afterwards went into the apartment in which we had breakfaſted, and within a little time were joined by the Baron, who had juſt returned from his walk. He addreſſed us in no very lively manner; and my eyes encountering thoſe of the Baroneſs, I perfectly, though with pain, read their language, and could ſcarcely reſtrain my tears from ſhewing themſelves. Our viſiter, aſking a number of queſtions, each of which related to a different concern, and receiving from my Lord ſometimes a languid anſwer, and at other times only a monoſyllable, viewed him attentively, and exclaimed, "Bleſs me, Baron! you certainly are not well?"

"I acknowledge," he replied, "that I am not very well."

"My God!" I cried, "what is your malady, my dear Altenburg? You alarm me by this confeſſion. Take advice immediately; let me diſpatch a ſervant for—"

"Softly, ſoftly, my good, my tender Chriſtiana!" he ſaid, catching hold of my hand, and preſſing it with tenderneſs; "this mighty affliction is nothing more than a pain in my ſide; and as I intend within a few days to give my arm to the lancet, I do not ſuppoſe that I ſhall long have cauſe for complaint."

The

The Baroneſs looked at me again, and I thought incredulouſly: but the preſſure of my Altenburg yet thrilled my nerves; and his kind, his exquiſite ſmiles raiſed my love, and totally vanquiſhed my ſuſpicions. His ſpirits ſeemed to acquire a ſudden vigour; he ſpoke in a ſtrain almoſt lively, and ſmiled at the manner in which I had expreſſed my fears. My wounded heart ſeemed to take in a moſt delicious balm; but the gravity of the Baroneſs increaſing as that of Altenburg relaxed, in an inſtant I was again torturing myſelf with conjectures, and ſaid ſecretly, "The cool diſcernment of this woman is faithful and juſt; ſhe calmly views and

examines what tenderneſs and love cloſe my eyes upon."

I again grew uneaſy, and was ſo much under the influence of Lady L——, that her nods, her ſhrugs, and geſtures, which, though obſerved only by myſelf, were plentiful, filled me with doubts, tremors, and apprehenſions. At length a ſervant came in with letters which had juſt arrived from the poſt-houſe at the next town. The Baron ſaw the man at the door, and ſtarting from his ſeat, ruſhed forward, ſeized the different packets with a ſtrange anxiety; and having looked at the ſuperſcriptions, his face crimſoned, and he placed himſelf haſtily,

or rather ſeemed to fall upon his chair.

"Your ſide, my Lord?" cried the Baroneſs; "I fear it is extremely painful."

"No—yes," he anſwered, and was again riſing in order to leave the room; but Lady L—— begged him to uſe no exertion, and to break the ſeals without apology or ceremony. Seeing him gaze ſtrangely on the letters, and ſingularly irreſolute and undetermined, ſhe beckoned me to retire with her; but before I could get upon my trembling limbs, he had riſen, bowed, and withdrawn himſelf.

The Baroneſs ran up to me.—"Do you ſee," ſhe cried, "do you not perceive it? Ah! dear friend, compaſſionately, moſt compaſſionately do I feel for you!"—I ought not to have liſtened to her;—ſo however I did; and I am grieved to confeſs that, when I ſhould have exerted all my ſtrength of intellect as well as of body, I ſuffered both to forſake me, and wept upon a breaſt which perhaps contained a guileful enemy.

Within a few minutes, however, the impropriety of my conduct ſtruck me; and raiſing my head, I freely confeſſed to her that I deemed my weakneſs and folly contemptible. I

ſaw

ſaw her labouring for an arrangement of features to correſpond with ſome ſmooth-tongued ſpeech. This artifice, palpable in itſelf, ſerved to rouſe me; and I left the room with an aſſumed compoſure, though indeed I had little peace within my breaſt.

Altenburg has ſince continued in the library—I in my chamber, writing in tears, and troubling my Charlotte with my ſorrows; and the Baroneſs—But I muſt go to her, or ſhe will draw the moſt ſtrange and injurious concluſions from the conduct of me and my Lord. I wiſh I had never ſeen this woman; I have been faſcinated even by her tormentings.

* * * * *

Thank Heaven, ſhe is gone! She departed immediately after dinner, and I ſincerely hope I ſhall never ſee her again: ſuch a woman would baniſh me from the world beyond recal, if I were to be long in her ſociety. Altenburg partook of our repaſt, and behaved with ſo much eaſe and propriety, that I could ſcarcely think he was internally agitated, though our viſiter evidently ſeemed to conſider him as a polite impoſtor. When ſhe afterwards ſtepped into her carriage, ſhe ſaid ſome words to me in a low tone of voice which I did not fully underſtand; but I judged that they were inſinuations levelled at my quiet,

and

and am now glad that my ear did not catch them.

My husband and I had walked with her across the lawn; and after her carriage was driven away, he drew my arm through his own, and in sauntering with him over the turf, I was really as happy as I had been before the Baroness interrupted my quiet. We rambled till almost the close of day. Discoursing on dear and delicious subjects, our eyes frequently met each other most tenderly. My heart fluttered with rapture; my head inclined towards him, and my lips coveted the kisses which he pressed on them. I told him I was glad of our visiter's departure,

departure, and hoped we ſhould have no more ſuch intruders. He expreſſed the ſame wiſh, and confeſſed that he had imbibed a ſudden diſlike for the Baroneſs.

"We will be no longer ſeparated, my Chriſtiana," he cried, "no not even for an hour. You are ſo eſſential to my happineſs, that every little minute which divides me from you, becomes a tedious age: you are the life, the heart, the ſoul of Altenburg."

What an ecſtatic creature I became! The ſun went down in glorious ſplendour, and the delightful colours of the weſtern heaven were widely ſtretched.

Surely

Surely no breezes ſo ſoft had ever paſſed over creation; the face of Nature had never looked half ſo beautiful. It was the moſt precious hour that had ever intervened in the annals of time! How I ſecretly praiſed the great and inviſible Spirit! Oh how I thanked my God!

We returned to the Caſtle: he led me to the library, where I threw myſelf on a ſofa, and his arms claſped me, his breaſt was my pillow. Neither of us ſpoke for ſeveral minutes; but at length I raiſed my eyes, and ſaw above our heads the portrait of my ſofter parent—"Look there, Altenburg!" I cried; "my mother, ſhe ſmiles!"

"Yes,"

"Yes," he replied, "at the happineſs of her beloved daughter."

"At the love, at the tenderneſs of her dear daughter's huſband!"

"Her eyes are on us both," he exclaimed. "Dear ſaint, we are both thy children!"

I will ſay no more, Charlotte. I have no ſuſpicions, no doubts, no apprehenſions. The Baroneſs is a vile tempter, and I was too eaſily betrayed. My Lord will hereafter account for all thoſe little circumſtances which ſtruck me as peculiar; and if he ſhould not, I never will renew the ſelf-tormenting arts of which I have ſo recently diveſted myſelf.

Chriſtiana.

Baron

Baron Altenburg to Count Stendal.

THE ſummer tempeſt is awful while it continues, and its tremendous burſts and vivid fires may appal the ſtouteſt traveller. But ſink not, ſhuddering mortal! under the weight of thy terrors; for the labouring clouds will ere long ſmile over thine head, and inſtead of the wild lightnings which blaze around thee, the rays of the ſun will ſoon ſalute thy face again. And if evening be drawing nigh, and thy dwelling is yet far diſtant, the milder beacon of the night, and the gems of heaven ſhall ſmile moſt lovely on thee, and

and thou mayſt go forward, muſing on the ſublimity and beauties of Nature, and no longer trembling for her paſt wrath and uproar.

I thank you, dear Stendal, for your care and ſolicitude. Ah, God! how you have pained my heart! but it is now at eaſe; it is again at eaſe. For the laſt two days I have governed myſelf with a power which I feared I had not been able to aſſert; anarchy had obtained an aſcendency over reaſon, but has at length been made to retreat by the force that I had conceived to be entirely unequal to the conteſt.

My

My ſon!—I will think of him no more, or rather will feel for him no more. And yet what an extraordinary youth! beautiful in perſon, rich in underſtanding, and noble, though eccentric, in ſentiment. Oh! he might have drawn my heart into his own boſom; but, aſſaſſin-like, he ſtabs it in an hundred places, ſtill deeming the bloody marks too few! I cannot repeat any part of his letter; I ſcarcely dare reflect on it; it almoſt rouſed me into madneſs; it made me ſhudder with a thouſand agues, and ſent ſcalding tears into my eyes.

"Curſe the boy!" I have exclaimed.—"God pardon me, and bleſs

bleſs *him!*" I have added in the ſame moment, and before the imprecation could be regiſtered.

He tells me we muſt never know each other:—I do not wiſh it. I have looked confidently on the world for many a year, ſometimes encountered the ſerious form of danger without ſhrinking; but I ſhould have no courage to meet the eyes of my ſon: they would petrify me, convert my body, my limbs, my veins into marble, and fix me a ſenſeleſs ſtatue for men to gape at. Yet he is a noble fellow! Why did he refuſe the embraces of a father? Why would he not let me take him in my arms, and while fondly preſſing

preſſing him, examine the uncommon particles of his heart? Now I wiſh it not: he is ſuperior to me, and I will not ſtep forward to meet degradation. But I would give all the world, would freely abridge my life if—

Ah Stendal! pardon the weakneſs and inconſiſtencies of your agitated friend!—Agitated! I told you juſt now that I was calm, and ſo again I preſently ſhall be. Leopold, without my aſſiſtance, will, I think, be hereafter proſperous and happy; for it is evident that he poſſeſſes rare talents: and when I am in the grave, the excellencies of his heart, and the genius with which he is gifted, will bring him a thouſand

ſmiles,

ſmiles, though the fleſh of his father's face be eaten away.

I have thought much of this boy of late: but my mind at intervals has alſo dwelt on two other painful objects—on thoſe who, once dearer to me, treat me with equal diſdain and cruelty. Still I cannot ſay that I am injured; I cannot ſay this youth's pride and inflexibility are deſerving of ſcorn and reſentment; I cannot ſay the ſilence and contempt of this woman and her daughter fully entitle them to my neglect and indifference.

Leopold, Iſabella, and Auguſta!—can three ſuch characters be found in exiſtence?

exiſtence? Their circumſtances are nearly alike, and their paſſions ſimilar; were they not ſo widely ſeparated, I ſhould be inclined to believe that they had entered into a conſpiracy, in order to deprive me of reaſon, if not of life; and ſometimes I am half perſuaded that they are the agents of Fate, that they have a delegated power over me, and that they are commanded to lead me into madneſs and deſtruction.

But they ſhall not: there is a ſaving angel near me, who has a ready hand. Sweet Chriſtiana! thou art the good ſpirit to whom I owe my preſervation, and to whom I muſt confidently look for future protection. I have wronged thee,

thee, love, but will make atonement. Thy ſmiles are precious, and thou art liberal in beſtowing them on thy Altenburg. Oh my wife! as thou ſeemeſt to me the moſt perfect of women, ſurely thou art deſerving of being moſt happy: yet thou haſt lately wept—haſt hung in grief around my neck, and ſobbed upon my breaſt!

I was the cauſe of this ſorrow, and will henceforth ſtrive to be the cauſe of thy happineſs:—yes, by my redemption from poverty by thee, by thy ſoft pitying eyes, by my love, my honour—by the Almighty God, I will!!

This

This is a voluntary, a willing oath; and while I have life, will I abide by it. Shall I, like an inſenſible villain, daſh from me the hand that ſo generouſly ſaved me? or, like an aſſaſſin, ſtab the heart that ſo tenderly loves me? Every day I feel a thouſand ſelf-reproaches for my conduct towards my wife; and her mild forbearance, the ſoftneſs of her voice, and her ſilence on my errors, which muſt be palpable, make her a thouſand times more dear to me.

And I will deſerve the bleſſings that ſhe offers me; my mind, ſhaking off its heavy encumbrances, ſhall calmly dwell on her alone; and my heart,

putting aſide its inconſiſtent ſympathies, ſhall cling affectionately and devoutly to her while it has warmth and motion.

Altenburg.

Leopold to Charles.

MANY of your letters, my dear friend, have actually frightened me by their violence; but in the laſt that you wrote to me, there is a tranquillity which has baniſhed every apprehenſion. It ſhews you to me juſt as you were before our ſeparation; at leaſt I thought ſo when I firſt peruſed it, and

and that idea has made me read it over an hundred times ſince.

In this age of diſguiſe and affectation, when ſentiment is dreſſed by the rules of faſhion, and when few will allow that they are without the commodity, and the art of adorning it, a man's mind can be little underſtood by the ſtyle of his epiſtles; you, however, are fully known to me, for I have read the faithful volume of your heart, and found it genuine, pure, and unmutilated.

Cheriſh the ſtranger Peace, and hold her long and faſt to your breaſt; ſhe will repay your endearments with

ſubſtantial bleſſings; and her love at length will grow ſo ſtrong, that ſhe will never again abandon you. She delights in the ready ſmile: and were man more grateful, more frequently would her ſandals paſs over his threſhold, and longer would ſhe ſojourn in his dwelling.

I willingly allow that the viciſſitudes which have of late awaited you, were ſufficient to diſcompoſe the calmeſt temper, and to trouble and afflict the firmeſt heart. I am often inclined to diſbelieve the tales and legends of the extraordinary ſtrength of the human mind; many of thoſe of antiquity I deem fabulous and abſurd:

abſurd:—in ſuch ſituations man can be the only judge of himſelf; for by-ſtanders and obſervers muſt be incompetent, and not know any thing reſpecting that on which they attempt to decide.

I am bending over a dying friend; I ſhew no grief, heave no ſighs, ſhed no tears. What impulſe, therefore, governs my heart? What ideas have I in my mind? I am conſoled by the knowledge that every other mortal muſt go the ways of the departing ſoul, and my thoughts are becalmed by the ſweet aſſurance of immortality? No ſuch thing: whatever my countenance may expreſs, whatever philo-

ſophy it beſpeaks, my heart is pierced to the centre by anguiſh, and a ſtream of blood ſeems to flow from it in extreme pain. Thoſe who are around me praiſe, and are ready to proclaim my ſuperior wiſdom and fortitude, while I know myſelf to be the moſt imbecile and wretched creature in exiſtence.

The beſt written piece of biography muſt for reaſons like the preſent, contain many errors, if it be not the performance of the very perſon of whom it directly ſpeaks: and allowing it is ſo, we ſhall more readily admit the incidents than the ſentiments; the actual reſuſcitation of ideas is, I think, impoſſible;

we

we may indeed conjure up a ſhadow, but the ſubſtance is for ever gone beyond recal.

I am, however, wandering; ſtrange that it muſt be always thus with me! Should I ever attempt the taſk of a poet, I muſt avoid touching on the epic and dramatic, having ſo little knowledge of the unities.

I congratulate you, dear Charles, on your preſent ſtate of mind; and the deſcription of your ſituation, and of the manner in which you are paſſing your days, is truly pleaſing. In the warmth of imagination I have tranſported myſelf to your quiet

dwelling, have walked with you in the ſurrounding groves, held converſe with the firſt friend of my heart, and heard the ſweet voice, and alſo ſeen the ſweeter ſmiles of his Elizabeth.

How unenviable is that mind which has no powers for ſuch excurſions! The very viſions that cheat us are delightful; and knowing them to be too ſplendid for reality, and too happy to be changed into the certainties of life, we ſee them diſappear without any extraordinary regret, and again indulge ourſelves in mental ſorcery. Since you left the neighbourhood, I have cultivated no ſociety, formed no connections whatever; but I have

ſeverely

ſeverely felt the loſs of your friend-ſhip: and when I turn my eyes on him who baniſhed you from hence, for uniting yourſelf to youth, to inno-cence, and to lovelineſs, in oppoſition to a ſtubborn will, I can ſcarcely ſmother the ſtrong reſentment that lodges in my breaſt.

Some few days ago I met your fa-ther in the coppice, where you and I have ſo often, and ſo happily walked and talked.—

Solitary, diſcontented, ſelf-afflicted mortal! if thou wouldſt but bring thy-ſelf once more to ſtrain thy ſon to thy heart, and preſs thy lips on the roſy

face of Elizabeth, thou wouldſt no longer appear wrapped in the glooms of winter, but with all the radiance of autumn gleaming around thee.—

I bowed to him, but did not ſpeak; he ſaluted me in the ſame ſilent manner, and paſſed on. My eye, however, was much deceived if it did not ſee a faint ſmile ſteal upon his cheek—a ſmile which may hereafter diffuſe over the whole countenance, and which alſo may, at no long diſtance of time, beam upon my deſerving friend and his beauteous wife. Yes, I anticipate the time when your offended parent will call you back with a thouſand times more joy than

if

if you had never been ſeparated, when you will be reinſtated in all the honours which it was once his command ſhould wait on you, and when the *fête* of the happy tenantry, and the merry peal of the village bells ſhall celebrate your return to your native ſhades.

I indulged theſe reflections laſt night near the walls of the caſtle, and directly under the window of the chamber which you uſed to occupy. The ſeaſon was as delightful as my meditations; the moon was ſmiling unveiled; the tall trees near the weſtern corner of the building, nodded to the breezes; and the flute of poor blind

William ſent ſome ſtrains of tender ſweetneſs from the door of his cottage:—Ah it was a delicious hour!

* * * * *

After thus calmly thinking, thus calmly writing, can you, dear Charles, believe that I have lately been nearly deprived of reaſon? that my heart has been pierced as with a dagger, and that I have alternately ſobbed like a child, and raved like a maniac? I *have*. But my ſenſes are again compact, and I have talked myſelf into firmneſs.

At the time of your father's coming to take poſſeſſion of the caſtle, and when

when you firſt were inclined to allow me your friendſhip, the prejudices of the world, and the diſtinctions of ſociety were not unknown to me; and I thought it not improbable that a young man, educated as you had been, might have ſtrongly imbibed thoſe notions which are widely diffuſed, and generally adopted.

"I will ſee whether my conjectures are right, or not," I ſaid to my guardian, my protector; "I will confeſs to the young gentleman my actual ſituation:—a repulſe at a ſeaſon like the preſent I ſhould ſoon forget; but were I to meet it after a mutual declaration of friendſhip, and after my heart had

admitted him as a brother, it might long continue to mortify, to ſcourge, and to torment me."

When I next ſaw you, I opened myſelf; told you that I was a creature of the Rector's bounty, a baſtard; the ſon of a man whom I had never ſeen, who had abandoned me and my unfortunate mother, and of whom I thought with horror and diſguſt!

What did you do?—gave me an embrace as ſtrong as if your mother's womb had produced me. What did you ſay?—"Leopold, by the God whom I believe in, and worſhip, you ſhall be as dear to me as if you were my

my brother!"—Oh Charles, Charles! I then wept, and my eyes even now are growing blind with tears. My generous Charles—exemplary friend!

* * * * *

Theſe paſſions muſt not have ſuch domination; for on the ceaſing of every fit, I think my heart is more and more impaired!

* * * * *

Well!—This father of whom I have ſpoken is, I find, ſtill living—is a man of rank and fortune, and not what he declared himſelf to be when he ruined, and gave the death-blow to my mother. After a ſilence and neglect

neglect of nearly twenty years, during which time his purſuits may have been in the higheſt degree vicious and diſgraceful, he has offered me his protection, and ſent an ambaſſador to bring me before him. I was aſtoniſhed, nearly mad, for a while I believe *actually* ſo. I thought that I had received an invitation to league with a murderer, and recoiled from it with indignation!

I never knew my mother, but her wrongs have been told me by my dear benefactor; and he has ſpoken of her in ſuch terms, that my heart for her has become all love and tenderneſs. I ſcarcely diſbelieve in ſpirits. Laſt night

night ſhe roſe from the grave, and ſmiled on me. I was alone in the church-yard—the hour late. Laſt night I ſaw her; my ſubſtance was too groſs for an embrace; but her arms were opened. It could not be merely fancy!

I muſt now attend my venerable friend, who, I fear, has but a little while to live. Though the functions of life are nearly put aſide, and though the renovating ſpirits of immortality are at hand, yet I ſhall follow his body to the grave with ſadneſs, and ſigh for him many an hour in the days of winter. But his aſhes will comingle with thoſe of his

his god-daughter—with thoſe of my mother.

Soon, dear Charles, I will write to you again more fully, and I hope more calmly, though I felt no diſcompoſure till within a few minutes. Farewel! a kind farewel to you and Elizabeth.

Leopold.

THE

THE ſtory has hitherto been told in the epiſtolary form; but the author begs his readers to take the remainder of it in the manner of narrative. His adopting the latter ſtyle will not, he truſts, be deemed injudicious, or leſs intereſting:—his characters are ſhifting widely; and as ſome of the principal ones have long been ſilent, and ſomewhat obſcured, owing to the difficulty of making them form a natural correſpondence, he is inclined more ſtrongly to alter the original plan of the performance. Whatever the opinions of other Noveliſts, or of readers, may be,

the

the writer of theſe ſheets does not remember to have ever read a ſingle work of imagination in letters, which might not have been improved, and made to appear more probable, conſequently more intereſting, had the author been leſs uniform, and occaſionally ſpoken for himſelf.

Beſides, not to anticipate, when friends part, and are afterwards divided by foreign lands and ſeas, letters become more rare, and are tranſmitted more tardily: ſhips are not often ſo exact in their arrivals as our inland mails; and the children of Aſtræus are ſeldom ſo accommodating as a ſingle poſtboy. The rules neceſſary

to

to be obſerved in a Novel and in a drama are nearly ſimilar. What chance of ſucceſs would a modern play-writer have, if he were to tranſport his perſonages as Shakſpeare has done in moſt of his enchanting pieces? Perhaps it may be augured, that when a modern poet ſhall diſcover the ſtrength of ſentiment, the grandeur and beauty of imagery which diſtinguiſh the Britiſh idol, an audience will forgive the magical migrations, the inconſiſtencies of time, place, and action; and not only allow him to ſkip acroſs the Channel into France, but alſo to ſtep from Milford Haven to Italy in the ſhifting of a ſcene.

* * * * *

Some

Some few days after Baron Altenburg had written his laſt letter to Count Stendal, he and the Baroneſs returned to Vienna. They were thus ſuddenly recalled by letters from Grotz, which announced the arrival of a lady of the name of Gardiner, who had been admitted into the houſe as a relation of the family, and who, ſince her coming thither, had been much indiſpoſed, and very ſolicitous to ſee thoſe friends for whom ſhe had a conſiderable time been ſeeking.

The Baroneſs did not recollect the name, which ſounded foreign to her ear; the intelligence of the ſteward, however, highly intereſted her; and

on

on her return to Vienna, ſhe diſcovered, in the ſuppoſed ſtranger, the only ſurviving ſiſter of her late mother. She really felt the pleaſure ſhe expreſſed; for ſhe had long concluded her aunt to be dead, and had heard, ſeveral years previous to this meeting, that Mrs. Gardiner, then bearing another name, had been loſt in a ſtorm near Barbadoes.

The life of this relation had been, indeed, a ſtrange mixture of ſucceſſes and miſchances; but as this book is not intended as a vehicle for epiſodes, it will only be ſaid that the perſon newly introduced to the notice of the reader, had recently ſtepped into a ſtate of

ſecond

ſecond widowhood, and was ſoon going to England to receive a large fortune, which her laſt huſband, a native of that country, who had been a merchant in India, bequeathed to a truly excellent wife.

The tender, the ſtudiouſly humane Chriſtiana ſerved to remove the indiſpoſition of her aunt, which aroſe partly from fatigue and anxiety; and Altenburg was pleaſed in the diſcovery that had been lately made. But the neceſſity of Mrs. Gardiner's early departure was very diſpleaſing to her niece; and as neither the journey could be protracted, nor the regret put aſide, one morning when they had been

been in Vienna ſomewhat more than a month, Chriſtiana entreated her Lord to go for a while to England.

Altenburg, not expecting ſuch a requeſt, ſtarted on her making it, and was inclined to oppoſition; but the petition was urged again with a thouſand new ſmiles, and granted by him with a thouſand new pleaſures, though every one of them was quick in dying.

The Baroneſs and Mrs. Gardiner were delighted with the acquieſcence of Altenburg; but he, going ſoon after to the library, found that not a

ſingle ray of their happineſs had been diffuſed in his almoſt comfortleſs breaſt. He paced the room in great diſturbance, and folded his arms, as if by that means he ſtrove to alleviate ſome inward pain. Having murmured a few words, but what they were he ſcarcely knew himſelf, he took from his boſom (was he culpable for the act?) a miniature of Iſabella.

He did not immediately beſtow on it any particular mark of favour; on the contrary, he held it at ſome diſtance from him, and looked on it only with the eyes of pity. *He held it at ſome diſtance from him*; but a more than common thought ſeemed to

ſtrike to the center of his brain; and he hugged the reſemblance of her who was once ſo dear, ſo precious to him, as if he wiſhed to incorporate it with his heart.

He wept a flood of cruel tears, and burſt into many exclamations, denoting pain and wretchedneſs.

"And muſt I leave thee?" he cried, gazing on the picture of Iſabella; "muſt I leave thee and our daughter, our innocent child, perhaps to periſh for want! Theſe eyes ſmiled on me ſeventeen years: ſo long did this lovely boſom bear within it a true and ardent love; ſo long were theſe

delicate arms thrown with a diſſolving tenderneſs around my neck. Yet I left thee—in a moment of womaniſh fear I left thee! And while thou wert journeying on the road of grief and diſappointment, I was poſting, on the wings of a new-created love, to the goal of wealth and pleaſure. Baſe, hypocritical Altenburg! Unhappy and neglected Iſabella! thou mayſt be compared to a tree, which was beautiful in its bloſſoms, and delicious in its fruit;—I looked, admired, and feaſted; till, by repeated thefts, and by the boughs being too rudely ſhaken, they became ſtripped, and were incapable of bearing bloom, nay, even of putting forth their leaves. The fated

robber

robber fled, but not till he had carved upon the tender rind his infamous and cruel name—the name of Altenburg!"

In ſuch ruminations as the foregoing, and with his mind frequently reverting to the extraordinary ſon of Joſephine, paſſed his time till the arrival of the day on which he left Vienna; nor could the buſtle, occaſioned afterwards by the embarkation for England, rout the ſtrong images from his mind. Chriſtiana often ſmiled on him, and as often did he preſs her to his breaſt; but he frequently ſtole away from her for a few minutes, and going to the ſtern of the veſſel, looking on the bed of waters he was leaving behind,

behind, and murmuring thoſe names which were never to be eraſed from his memory, he would indulge the ſpirit of melancholy: and it was not unuſual for him repeatedly to lay his hand upon his heart, and ſorrowfully exclaim, "Ah! here is much amiſs!"

END OF VOL. I.

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